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Setting by Robert Edmond Jones

SEE NAPLES AND DIE

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

ELMER RICE

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NEW YORK LOS ANGELES
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Rice

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LEWIS E. GENSLER
PRESENTS

SEE NAPLES AND DIE

An Extravagant Comedy in Three Acts
By ELMER RICE
DIRECTED BY THE AUTHOR
SETTINGS BY ROBERT EDMOND JONES

CHARACTERS

(IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE)

A Small Chess-Player ..... *Gregory Dniestroff*
A Bearded Chess-Player ..... *S. Sarmatoff*
Basil Rowlinson ..... *Horace Cooper*
Angelo de'Medici ..... *Rinaldo Schenone*
Lucy Evans ..... *Beatrice Herford*
Hugo von Klaus ..... *Walter Dreher*
Charles Carroll ..... *Roger Pryor*
Luisa ..... *Rose Rolanda*
Hjordis de'Medici ..... *Margaret Arrow*
Kunegunde Wandl ..... *Margaret Knapp Waller*
Nanette Dodge Kosoff ..... *Claudette Colbert*
(By arrangement with A. H. Woods)
Carriage Driver ..... *Edward Maurelli*
Ivan Ivanovitch Kosoff ..... *Pedro De Cordoba*
Stepan ..... *Albert West*
Mary Elizabeth Dodge Norton ..... *Lucille Sears*
General Jan Skulany ..... *Marvin Kline*
Fascist Guards ..... *Ulisse Mattioli*, *Joseph Pierantoni*

The scene is the terrace of the Albergo-Pensione de'Medici, at Capo di Sorrento, on the Bay of Naples.

The time is an afternoon in Spring.

The action is continuous.

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ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE: The terrace of the Albergo-Pensione de' Medici, on the Bay of Naples, near Sorrento. The tiny, modest hotel is on the main road, from Sorrento to Sant' Agata, and the terrace is five or six feet above the level of the road. The terrace is paved with large square tiles, alternately gray and dull red, forming a sort of checkerboard design. At the outer edge of the terrace, upstage, a stone parapet runs the entire width of the stage, following the curve of the road, so that the terrace is considerably deeper at the left than at the right.

On this parapet are green flower-boxes filled with geraniums. The road, which is just beyond the terrace is, of course, invisible. In fact, nothing can be seen of the passing stream of traffic, except occasionally, the head of a cocchiere, mounted upon the seat of his vettura.

Downstage right, a grape arbor leads offstage to the garden. At the left is part of one wall of the Albergo-Pensione. Downstage left, French windows afford access to a guest room. Beyond this, two steps lead up to a higher level of the terrace upon which opens the main entrance door to the establishment. Still further up-

stage, and beyond the end of the wing, another arbor arches over a flight of steps—invisible to the spectators —which leads down to the road below. On the wall, between the two doors, is a profile of Mussolini, stencilled in black, and below it the legend "Vv. Mussolini." Above the entrance door is a small railed balcony, communicating by means of French windows, with a bedroom on the second floor.

Across the road, at the right, part of the balcony of a private villa is visible, and as it is about as high above the road as the terrace, persons standing upon it can be seen from the waist up.

In the background, a Southern Italian panorama recedes to the horizon: lemon-groves, olive-groves, the waters of the Bay of Naples, sparkling in the sunlight, the distant hills beyond Castellemare di Stabia, and, far off, cone-shaped Vesuvius, projecting a column of white smoke against the brilliant blue of the cloudless sky.

The terrace itself contains by way of furniture, three small, round iron tables of the familiar outdoor-café type; one on the upper level of the terrace, and two on the lower level. Behind each table are two round iron chairs.

Downstage left, below the entrance to the guest room, a canvas recliner stands against the wall.

At the rise of the curtain, four men are seen upon the terrace. Two of them are seated at the small table

on the upper level, deeply absorbed in a chess-game. One is a bulky, be-spectacled man, with a square, black beard. His head, which is quite bald, is burned a fiery red by the sun. The other man is small and thin and has a little black moustache. Both men wear their coats and are apparently oblivious to the fierce sunlight which beats down upon their uncovered heads. At long intervals, one or the other moves a piece on the chess-board; but they do not exchange a word, nor does either of them pay the least attention to anything but the game.

Angelo de'Medici, the proprietor of the Albergo-Pensione, half-asleep, lies in the canvas recliner, drowsily fingering a guitar and softly humming a Neapolitan air. He is a handsome Italian, in the early thirties.

In the middle of the terrace is Basil Rowlinson, a middle-aged Englishman. He is standing before a small easel and is busily at work upon an astonishingly bad water-color of the scene that lies before him. Rowlinson has thick, unkempt hair, streaked with gray, and his face is burnt a brick-red. He wears a faded cotton jersey, a pair of badly worn trousers and huge, clumsy, battered shoes.

A moment after the rise of the curtain, a donkey brays loudly, then a carriage rolls by from left to right, the head of the driver and his whip just visible above the top of the wall. As the carriage disappears at the right, Mrs. Evans, a sweet-faced, elderly American lady, comes out of the house, parasol in hand.

MRS. EVANS

Goodness, Mr. Rowlinson, aren't you the industrious one, though! And in the hot sun, too. May I look?

ROWLINSON

Yes, if you like. It's not quite finished, you know.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, that doesn't matter. I'll make allowances. [*Effusively.*] Oh, it's lovely—simply lovely! So—so—tt! —lovely!

ROWLINSON

[*Looking admiringly at the painting*]: It *is* coming along rather well.

MRS. EVANS

It's simply beautiful! What is it supposed to be, a sort of a—?
[*She breaks off inquiringly.*]

ROWLINSON

Don't you recognize it? It's that bit of landscape there—the Bay of Naples and all that.

MRS. EVANS

Why, of course! I see what you mean—that blue.

nd that other blue is the sky. And the green trees and
. Well, all I can say is that it's a wonderful talent.
DE'MEDICI *drops off to sleep.*]

ROWLINSON

It's not an easy bit to get down on paper.

MRS. EVANS

Easy! Why, I could no more do it than fly. What I always say is, it's something you have to be born with. Like my daughter-in-law: she'll take just anything—an empty coffee-can or anything—and before you know it, she'll turn it into the loveliest little hand-painted flower-vase you ever saw. Oh, have you heard the exciting news?

ROWLINSON

No, I don't think that I have.

MRS. EVANS

Well, I must tell you! I just heard from Mrs. de' Medici that a most distinguished visitor is expected.

ROWLINSON

Oh, really?

MRS. EVANS

Yes indeed! A real Russian prince—Prince

something-or-other Ivanoff. And what makes it even more exciting is that he's the one who just married Nanette Dodge.

ROWLINSON

Nanette Dodge? Who is Nanette Dodge?

MRS. EVANS

Goodness, I thought everybody knows who Nanette Dodge is. You've surely seen her pictures in the Sunday picture sections, haven't you? And then all that long account of her wedding in the Paris Herald the other day.

ROWLINSON

No, I can't say that I have. I don't read the American papers, you see.

MRS. EVANS

No, I suppose you read the English papers, don't you? Well, I never can get interested in the English papers myself. But I suppose it's all a matter of what you're used to. To think of them coming here on their honeymoon! I can just see my daughter-in-law when she hears that I'm in the same hotel with a real prince. She'll be so excited that she won't know what to do. She's *so* interested in royalty. She was on the committee that greeted Queen Marie.

ROWLINSON

[*Resuming his painting*]: We're rather used to Princes in England. We've no end of them mucking about the place, you know.

MRS. EVANS

Well, of course, we don't allow anything like that in America. We're much too advanced and democratic for anything like that. Well, I must take my little constitutional before those races begin again. I always say that if people only had sense enough to keep active and to use plenty of water inside and out, there wouldn't be much need for doctors. [*Lowering her voice.*] Some of these Italians around here look as though they didn't see the inside of a bath-tub from one year's end to the other. And shiftless—my goodness! [*Noticing* DE' MEDICI.] Look at him, will you, lying there fast asleep, while his wife slaves away in the kitchen. No American woman would put up with anything like that. [*Shaking her parasol at him.*] Lazy thing!

[DE'MEDICI *sleeps on. As* MRS. EVANS *goes down the steps at the left,* HUGO VON KLAUS *enters from the hotel. He is about forty, and obviously a German, with his round, pink face, small blond moustache and close-cropped, bristly hair. He speaks almost perfect English, with a very slight accent. He is dressed in bare-foot sandals and a pajama-like suit, made of yellow and red striped Turkish*

toweling. Over his arm, he carries a pair of swimming-trunks.]

ROWLINSON

[*Looking up, as* VON KLAUS *approaches*]: Oh, I say! You're all ready for a bathe, aren't you?

VON KLAUS

Is it, perhaps, too early for you?

ROWLINSON

No, it's quite all right. I'll be right along with you. [*He begins putting away his paints.*]

VON KLAUS

But I do not wish to disturb your work. I am expecting later a friend and I must return before he shall arrive. Perhaps if you could so kindly give me directions—

ROWLINSON

No, I'll go along with you. Just wait half a second, while I nip up to my room and fetch my bathing-costume.

VON KLAUS

[*Bowing*]: It is very kind—

ROWLINSON

[*Paint-box in hand, walking with a curious, waddling gait to the entrance of the hotel*]: I shan't be a moment.

[*He goes into the building.* VON KLAUS *glances casually at the water-color on the easel, starts in amazement, then, unable to believe that it is as bad as it looks, fishes in his pocket, produces a monocle, and fixing it in his eye, stares at the painting.*]

[CHARLES CARROLL *enters, at the right, from the garden. He is an American, about twenty-six years old. He is coatless, and wears a sport-shirt, open at the neck, white flannel trousers and white sport-shoes.* VON KLAUS, *hearing* CHARLIE *behind him, turns, catches* CHARLIE'S *eye and silently looks back at the water-color.* CHARLIE *comes over and stands by him. For a moment, they both look at the water-color, then they look at each other.*]

CHARLIE

English. [VON KLAUS *nods, understandingly.*] You're staying here, I take it?

VON KLAUS

Yes, I have arrived before luncheon from Naples on the steamboat.

CHARLIE

Well, I'm here to say that you've picked out what is practically the garden-spot of all creation—if it does cost me the California vote!

VON KLAUS

The view has been called by Goethe incomparable.

He writes in his letters from Italy: "Die Aussicht nach Castellamare und Sorrento, nah und köstlich."

CHARLIE

Exactly! I couldn't have phrased it better, myself. You staying a while?

VON KLAUS

Unfortunately, my visit will be brief. I have come not in search of pleasure, but upon a matter of business.

CHARLIE

Well, you won't find much business around here. [*Indicating* DE'MEDICI.] One of our prominent businessmen—the proprietor of this humble hostelry. Just sleeping off the effects of this morning's nap.

VON KLAUS

Excuse me, are you perhaps Mr. Carroll?

CHARLIE

[*Looking at him in surprise*]: Why yes, I am. In fact, Charles Carroll. Does that mean anything to you?

VON KLAUS

[*Formally*]: I am honored to make your acquaintance.

CHARLIE

Well, thanks a lot. I don't think I caught your name.

VON KLAUS

I am Hugo von Klaus.

CHARLIE

[*Dubiously*]: Oh! [*Extending his hand.*] How do, Mr. von Klaus?

VON KLAUS

[*Shaking hands and bowing*]: Thank you.

CHARLIE

What gave you the idea that my name is Carroll?

VON KLAUS

It is only that I—

ROWLINSON

[*Coming out of the hotel*]: Here I am! Hello there, Carroll!

[*He carries a pair of trunks, a bath-towel and a cake of soap.*]

CHARLIE

Howdy! [*To* VON KLAUS.] What were you going to say?

VON KLAUS

It was nothing of consequence. [*To* ROWLINSON.] Shall we go, then?

ROWLINSON

I'm ready. Don't you want to have a bathe with us, Carroll?

CHARLIE

Thanks. I had my swim this morning.

ROWLINSON

[*To* VON KLAUS]: Well, come along then, old chap.

[LUISA, *the maid-of-all-work, is heard singing the refrain of Giovanezza as she comes along at the right. The three men watch her as she appears, crosses the terrace, and enters the house.* DE'MEDICI *stirs and wakes up slowly.* LUISA *is a beautiful girl of about eighteen, with liquid eyes, full red lips and rich, brown skin. She is bare-footed and bare-legged. In fact her only garment is an abbreviated, sleeveless dress, which does not conceal her figure. She balances a water-jug upon her head and walks with a free swinging gait, her hands upon her hips. The men stand aside to let her pass.* VON KLAUS *fixes his monocle in his eye and stares after her.* DE'MEDICI *rises, languidly and follows her into the house, taking up the refrain.*]

ROWLINSON

[*As* LUISA *disappears*]: It's shocking, you know, the way that creature goes about, insufficiently clothed.

VON KLAUS

[*To* CHARLIE *with deep interest*]: Is she employed by the establishment?

CHARLIE

Yes, she does all the work that the donkeys refuse to do. I take it you find her easy to look at.

ROWLINSON

She shouldn't be permitted to go about like that. I'm certain she arouses lascivious desires in some of the men about the place.

CHARLIE

You know it wouldn't surprise me a bit.

ROWLINSON

Something should really be done about it. They've no sense whatever of the proprieties, these Latins.

[*He goes upstage and off down the steps.* VON KLAUS *exchanges another look with* CHARLIE *and follows* ROWLINSON *off.*]

[CHARLIE *looks after* VON KLAUS *for a moment then*

walks up and down the terrace, in obvious perplexity. KUNEGUNDE WANDL *appears on the balcony of the villa across the road. She is a dark, petite Viennese, very attractive, but no longer young. She sees* CHARLIE *and tries to attract his attention, but he is too occupied to see her.*]

[*A vettura stops beneath the terrace. The head of the cocchiere, topped by a low-crowned, highly-varnished plug-hat, can be seen above the flower-boxes.*]

THE COCCHIERE

[*To the chess-players*]: Signori! Domani Amalfi? Sehr schön! Ottante lire. Tutto giorno. Oc'zig lire. Amalfi. Bella vista. [*Seeing that they are not paying the least attention to him, he hisses to attract* CHARLIE'S *attention.*] Ss! Signore! [*As* CHARLIE *looks up.*] Amalfi! Domani Amalfi! Ottante lire. Domani mattino. Molta bella! Bellissima!

[CHARLIE *suddenly sees* KUNEGUNDE *and waves to her.*]

THE COCCHIERE

[*Still trying to entice* CHARLIE]: Sehr schön, Amalfi. Oc'zig lire. Bew-tiful.

[CHARLIE *waves him impatiently away.* THE COCCHIERE *cracks his whip and drives off.*]

CHARLIE

[*Beckoning* to KUNEGUNDE]: Come on over!

[*She nods and leaves the balcony.* SIGNORA HJORDIS DE'MEDICI, *the proprietress, comes out of the hotel carrying an armful of fresh bed-linens. She is a tall, fair, Scandinavian about thirty-five years old. As she comes downstage towards the bedroom,* CHARLIE *turns away from the balcony and sees her.*]

CHARLIE

Oh, Mrs. de'Medici!

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Turning*]: Please?

[*She speaks with a rather marked accent.*]

CHARLIE

Can I get a couple of Cinzanos? Fräulein Wandl is coming over.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Just so soon as I take to the bedroom the sheets, Mr. Carroll.

CHARLIE

All right. No hurry. More people coming?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Yes, I am expecting this afternoon two more guests.

The German gentleman who has arrived this morning has engaged for them a room.

CHARLIE

Oh, that man of mystery, huh? He seems to have a wide circle of acquaintances.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Going towards the bedroom, stopping in door*]: Excuse me; I must prepare the bed, before they are arriving. [*Stopping again and unburdening her heart.*] Everything I must do myself. Since five o'clock in the morning, I am working, working.

CHARLIE

You ought to have more help.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Yes, help! Where can I find help? The Italian girls do not want to work. And dirty! I would write to my brother in Norway he should send me a good strong Norwegian girl, only my husband would not allow that I should send that Luisa away. [*Muttering angrily.*] Dit store svin!

[*She enters the bedroom.* CHARLIE *looks after her half-embarrassed, half-amused as* KUNEGUNDE WANDL *comes up the steps and onto the terrace.*]

CHARLIE

[*Turning and going up to her*]: Hello, Kunie.

KUNIE

[*With an engaging accent*]: Good afternoon, Sharles.

[*She extends her hand which he clasps vigorously.*]

KUNIE

[*Withdrawing her hand*]: Not so strong, Sharles!

CHARLIE

[*Contritely*]: Oh, I'm sorry! I must remember not to be so virile.

KUNIE

It is nossing. Only in everysing you Americans are so strong— [*Clenching her fists.*] So brrr! Here, I will show you. [*She places her hand in his palm and raises it to his lips.*] Like zat, no?

CHARLIE

Küss die Hand, gnädige Fräulein. No, I like this way better.

[*He takes her in his arms and tries to kiss her.*]

KUNIE

[*Resisting*]: Have care, Sharles!

[*She indicates the chess-players.*]

CHARLIE

Oh, that's all right. They don't understand a word of English.
[*He kisses her.*]

KUNIE

[*Pushing him away*]: Spitzbub!

CHARLIE

That's a fighting word where I come from. [*Taking her by the hand.*] Come on and sit down. We'll have a drink in a minute—maybe.
[*He leads her to a table at the left, where she seats herself.*]

CHARLIE

[*Producing cigarettes*]: Cigarette?

KUNIE

Zank you!

CHARLIE

[*As he lights the cigarettes*]: Well, how's that stalwart fighting man, the General, today? [*As she answers with a grimace and a gesture.*] Not so good? You know, I never knew a General who had so few good days.
[*He sits opposite her.*]

KUNIE

[*Leaning forward and looking about to see that they are not overheard*]: Sharles, I must speak wis you.

CHARLIE

That suits me fine. Nothing wrong, I hope.

KUNIE

I have somesing to tell you— [*Breaking off as* MRS. DE'MEDICI *comes out of the bedroom.*] Moment! Guten Tag, Frau de'Medici.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Approaching*]: Guten Tag, gnädige Fräulein. Wie geht es Ihnen, heute?

KUNIE

Ganz woll, danke. Und Ihnen?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Auch woll, danke vielmals. The Cinzano, Mr. Carroll—I shall fetch it at once.

CHARLIE

[*As she enters the hotel*]: Thanks. [*To* KUNIE.] But maybe you'd rather have wine. She's got some vino di Capri that's not bad at all.
[*He starts to rise.*]

KUNIE

[*Putting her hand on his*]: No, please! I do not wish for it. I wish only to speak wis you.

CHARLIE

Well, whatever you say.

KUNIE

Sharles, tomorrow he is going away!

CHARLIE

[*Surprised*]: Who? Skulany?

KUNIE

Yes.

CHARLIE

But I thought—

KUNIE

Ze plans have been changed. Ze coup d'état to oversrow ze Rumanian government is for next week decided.

CHARLIE

[*Whistling*]: Phew! That's news.

KUNIE

[*Anxiously*]: You will not tell someone, Sharles? I do not wish to betray him.

CHARLIE

Don't worry, Kunie. I won't give it away. So he's off tomorrow, is he?

KUNIE

Yes. You saw, perhaps, ze motor-car, zat arrived zis morning?

CHARLIE

What, that big closed Suiza?

KUNIE

Yes, he has bought it to take him away.

CHARLIE

So that's it! I thought maybe it belonged to some fellow-murderer who had just dropped in to talk about the good old days. But you don't mean to say he's going to motor all the way to Rumania!

KUNIE

To Buda-Pest. Zere he will meet ze osser leaders.

CHARLIE

But why doesn't he go by train?

KUNIE

He has fear. Always he has fear of assassination. Even here, he has always fear. Already since we are here, he has not five times gone out. He has many, many enemies and so he has fear.

CHARLIE

Sounds like a swell kind of a life. Funny how different temperaments are. Now take me. The danger of political assassination is something I never give a thought to.

KUNIE

It will happen one day to him. He has fear to go back to Rumania; but if he does not go, zey will choose anosser leader and he will have nossing.

CHARLIE

[*Leaning forward and taking her hand*]: But what about you, Kunie? You're not going with him, are you?

KUNIE

[*Shrugging her shoulders helplessly*]: I do not know what I should do.

CHARLIE

But, God, you don't *want* to go to Rumania with that bandit, do you?

KUNIE

No. I have been now wis him for six years—and it is enough.

CHARLIE

Six years too much, from what you've told me of him! How could you ever stay with him that long?

KUNIE

I do not know. Since ze war, it has been hard. I have lost my father and ze most of my friends. In Vienna, is now everybody poor. So I stayed wis him—faute de mieux!

CHARLIE

[*Tenderly*]: I know, Kunie! You've had a tough break! But it's time you snapped out of it! I mean I think you ought to look upon the Skulany episode as a closed incident.

[LUISA *has come out of the hotel with a tray containing a siphon of soda-water and two goblets half-filled with a brownish liquid.*]

KUNIE

I sink so, too. It is why I wish to speak wis you.

CHARLIE

You betcha! Anything I can do for you—!

LUISA

[*Putting the tray on the table*]: Eccola, signore.

CHARLIE

Grazie, Luisa.

LUISA

[*Rolling her eyes at him*]: Prego, signore.
[*She idles back to the hotel.*]

CHARLIE

[*Feeling the siphon*]: Lukewarm, of course!
[*His eyes wander in* LUISA's *direction.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Calling off-stage*]: Luisa!

LUISA

Si, si, signora! Subito!
[*She smiles at* CHARLIE, *then hurries into the hotel.*]

CHARLIE

It's lucky that Luisa doesn't understand Norwegian.

KUNIE

[*Quizzically*]: You are liking her, yes?

CHARLIE

Who, me? Well, you know how it is. I sort of just

can't help being human. [*Raising his glass.*] Well, God help Rumania!

KUNIE

[*Laughing, drinking*]: You are a nice boy, Sharles. [*Pats his hand.*]

CHARLIE

[*Making a wry face*]: This stuff is really terrible without ice. [*As he fills the glasses.*] Why does a country that has no ice produce the world's largest quota of icemen? I must write and ask Dr. Cadman. [*Taking her hands.*] *You're* the little lady I like, Kunie.

KUNIE

Yes? You like me?

CHARLIE

I think you're swell.
[*He tries to kiss her.*]

KUNIE

Be a good boy, Sharles.

CHARLIE

How can I be good when you're around?
[*He tries again to kiss her.*]

KUNIE

[*Laughing*]: Not here, Sharles. [*Soberly.*] Sharles, is it true that you like me?

CHARLIE

[*A little huffily*]: Why, you know darned well I do.

KUNIE

Do not be angry. Only I sink perhaps it is because of what you have told me—that your betrothed has married someone else.

CHARLIE

[*Rising; greatly disturbed*]: It isn't anything of the sort! What do you take me for anyhow? Do you think I'm going to sit around the rest of my life mourning Nanette Dodge? If she wants a Russian prince, let her have him! Let her have six Russian princes and a couple of Maharajahs and a flock of elephants as far as I'm concerned. [*Impulsively.*] Listen, Kunie, you're coming to Paris with me!

KUNIE

[*Dubiously*]: I do not know, Sharles.

CHARLIE

All right. I'll do the knowing for us both. I should have left a week ago, but I just couldn't bear to leave

you here with that cut-throat. This thing is breaking just right for us. We'll get to Paris just in time to read of his assassination in Rumania. Unless, of course, you don't care enough to go with me.

KUNIE

I am caring for you so much, Sharles.

CHARLIE

Then where's the difficulty? You and I are going to get along great together! I think you're just swell. [*He kisses her.*]

KUNIE

You sink I am not too old for you?

CHARLIE

Don't be silly. What's a few years?

KUNIE

I am already sirty-three.

CHARLIE

[*Gallantly*]: I don't believe it. You don't look a day over twenty-five.

KUNIE

[*Laughing and patting his cheek*]: Oh, Sharles, you are *so* nice! But I would promise you, Sharles, I would

not be zhealous. If you should love someone else, it would make nossing out to me.

CHARLIE

Oh, that's all right about that. I'm really not so polygamous as I look. You don't mind my not having any money, do you?

KUNIE

In Paris, I can write political articles for ze German zhournals.

CHARLIE

Oh, I'll make enough to keep us going—if you can stand ten-franc dinners and carafe-wine. [*Impulsively kissing her.*] Gee, I feel great about it! Do you?

KUNIE

It makes me so happy, Sharles.

CHARLIE

Now, let's make some plans. If we leave here tomorrow on the boat for Naples—

[*He stops, abruptly, as* MRS. EVANS *comes up the steps and onto the terrace.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*Coming down to* CHARLIE *and* KUNIE]: Well, I've

just had a lovely walk. Clear down to that little Catholic church and back. I *do* wish, though, that someone would teach them how to keep their children clean. [*A little uncertainly, to* KUNIE]: How do you do?

KUNIE

[*Rising*]: Sank you.

MRS. EVANS

You're the young lady who lives in the white bungalow across the street, aren't you?

KUNIE

Yes, madam.

CHARLIE

[*None too cordially*]: Allow me to present Miss Wandl.

[*He crosses to the recliner and seats himself.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*Shaking hands*]: How do you do, Miss Wendell? I'm Mrs. Evans and I'm an American. You're not an Italian, are you?

KUNIE

No, I am from Vienna.

MRS. EVANS

Are you really? Well, I thought that anybody as

neat-looking as you wouldn't be an Italian. You know, I don't think I've ever met anyone from Vienna before. But my daughter-in-law tells me that it's a lovely place. She used to be a school teacher, back in the States, and she's been just about everywhere. And she says that nowhere do you get a better cup of coffee than in Vienna.

KUNIE

Yes, ze coffee is very good.

MRS. EVANS

Well, I must say, I like a good cup of coffee. [*Confidentially.*] You know, that's a thing the Italians don't know much about. But then, I think Italy is lovely, too. I love the scenery and the little donkey-carts and all. [*Lowering her voice again.*] I do get a little tired of spaghetti, though.

CHARLIE

Yes, it is tiring. You have to wind it around so much.

MRS. EVANS

Well, to tell you the truth, I always cut mine with my knife. Still, we can't expect to find everything the way it is at home. [*To* KUNIE]: Who is that very distinguished-looking gentleman who lives over there?

KUNIE

Zat is General Jan Skulany.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, a General, is he? I thought he must be somebody. He looks so very—so very—you know what I mean. What did you say his name was?

KUNIE

Jan Skulany.

MRS. EVANS

John Spillany. I must remember that, so I can write it to my daughter-in-law. She'll be very much interested. Her grandfather was a colonel in the Civil War. Is the General from Vienna, too?

KUNIE

He is Rumanian.

MRS. EVANS

[*Uncertainly*]: Oh, I see. Well, you know, geography has changed so since I was a girl that I don't try to keep up with it any more. I suppose he's a relative of yours, Miss Wendell?

CHARLIE

[*Quickly, before* KUNIE *can reply*]: Miss Wandl is

nursing him through a serious illness. He has a bad case of mortophobia.

MRS. EVANS

[*Sympathetically*]: Has he really? What a shame! I suppose that's why he goes out so seldom. Still, I think it would do him good to get out in the sun. They're using sunlight for so many things now.

CHARLIE

[*To* KUNIE]: I think that's a corking suggestion, Miss Wendell. You certainly should have him try sunlight.

MRS. EVANS

It can't do any harm to try it. Now with medicine, I've known cases where it's done more harm than good. I always say that getting out in the sun is Nature's medicine. After all, if it weren't meant to do us good, why was it put there?

CHARLIE

That's a hard question to answer.

MRS. EVANS

Yes, indeed. If people would only realize that everything is put in the world for our good, there wouldn't be so much discontent and unhappiness—divorce and intoxication and all that. [*To* KUNIE.] Still, it must be

a terrible responsibility for you, Miss Wendell, with a man as sick as that on your hands. But there's no nobler profession for a woman than nursing. It's a wonderful thing to be able to help others. What do you think of this new insulin treatment for diabetes, Miss Wendell?

KUNIE

I am sorry, but I do not know anysing about it.

MRS. EVANS

[*A little disappointed*]: Oh, don't you? My sister has been a sufferer for years and somebody told her that this insulin treatment is doing wonders, so I thought I'd like to have your opinion. Have you seen this lovely painting? It's by that English gentleman.

CHARLIE

Yes, it's unmistakably his.

MRS. EVANS

Yes, he is a genius, isn't he? I was saying to him, before, it's a gift you have to be born with.

CHARLIE

Only some people have to.

MRS. EVANS

Oh yes, of course! There's something so distinguished-

looking about the English, too. And I just love their accent. It's so quaint. [*Shaking hands with* KUNIE.] Well, goodbye, Miss Wendell, and do try to get the General out into the sunlight.

KUNIE

Sank you very much.

MRS. EVANS

Mr. Carroll, I hope you won't think me meddlesome, but I'm old enough to be your mother, and I don't like to see a fine young man like you poisoning his system with alcohol.

CHARLIE

I'm afraid to drink the water here.

MRS. EVANS

Well, you should get that bottled water—what do they call it?—Il Perugino, or something like that. That won't hurt you.

CHARLIE

I'll have to try it, some day.

MRS. EVANS

Yes, please do. And when you're older, you'll be grateful to me. [*She goes towards the house, then stops*

and turns.] Maloney, did you say his name was, Miss Wendell?

KUNIE

Skulany.

MRS. EVANS

Oh yes, Spillany. Thank you.

[*She enters the house, repeating the name several times, to herself.*]

CHARLIE

[*Very seriously, his hands upon her shoulders*]: Miss Wendell, from a strictly medical point of view, do you consider—

KUNIE

Spitzbub! Why do you tell ze lady such lies?

CHARLIE

Kunie, you have no understanding of American idealism. We are a moral and a right-thinking people with an insatiable appetite for romance. If I had let that saintly old lady know that you have been living in sin with a Balkan cut-throat—

[*He breaks off abruptly as* MRS. EVANS *comes out of the hotel again, carrying a book.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*As she crosses the terrace*]: I thought I'd just go to the garden to do my Italian lesson. It seems such a shame to sit indoors in this lovely weather. I often think that the best way we can show our thankfulness for the wonderful sunshine is by just enjoying it.

CHARLIE

You're absolutely right. In the words of the poet: As we journey through life, let us live by the way.

MRS. EVANS

That's very well put. I believe that by right living and clean thinking we can make our lives a prayer. Oh, have you heard about the Russian Prince who's coming here?

CHARLIE

Oh, so there's a Russian prince coming here, is there?

MRS. EVANS

Yes, indeed! The one that married Nanette Dodge, the other day. You must have read about the wedding in—

CHARLIE

[*Springing to his feet in utter amazement*]: Yes, I

read about it all right! You mean to say they're coming here?

MRS. EVANS

Isn't it exciting? Just think of them spending their honeymoon in a quiet little place like this! It shows you, Miss Wendell, how simple our rich young women really are.

CHARLIE

Mrs. Evans—are you really sure that Nanette Dodge is on her way here?

MRS. EVANS

Why, of course, I am. Mrs. de'Medici expects them this afternoon. I suppose they just wanted to slip off quietly by themselves somewhere. Well, we'll all have to do our best to make them feel at home. [*Starting toward the left.*] I must *do* my Italian. [*Sighing.*] Somehow I can't seem to get used to the way all their words end in o's and a's and i's.

[*She goes off at the right.* CHARLIE *completely bewildered by the news, is trying to decide upon a course of action.* KUNIE *watches him, in surprise.*]

KUNIE

[*The moment* MRS. EVANS *is out of sight*]: But Sharles, what is it, zen?

CHARLIE

[*With sudden resolution, gripping her arm*]: Listen, Kunie! Get back over there and pack your things as quickly as you can. We're leaving for Paris right away.

KUNIE

But Sharles, first I must—

CHARLIE

[*Impatiently*]: What? It shouldn't take you long to pack.

KUNIE

But Jan—I must tell him—

CHARLIE

You don't owe him anything. Tell him you're going, that's all. Tomorrow or today, what difference does it make? [*Pleadingly.*] Listen, dear, do it for *me*, won't you? I've got to get out of here before she gets here.

KUNIE

Zis is someone you know who is coming here?

CHARLIE

My God, Kunie, don't you understand? Nanette Dodge—she's the girl who—don't you see?

KUNIE

[*In astonishment*]: Zis Prinzessin—she is your betrothed—ze young lady who—?

CHARLIE

Yes, of course! And I don't want to see her. Go on, Kunie—go on and pack your things like a good girl. Anyhow, that damned race is going to start in a couple of minutes.

KUNIE

But, Sharles, why does ze Prinzessin come here?

CHARLIE

How should I know? It's all news to me! Just wants to make a monkey out of me, I guess. Well, she can go to hell, that's what she can do!

KUNIE

You are still loving her, yes?

CHARLIE

Love her? After what she did to me? Don't be funny! Come on, Kunie, be a sweet girl and pack your things. We've still got time to catch the boat to Naples. We'll be in Rome tonight and in Paris day after tomorrow. [*Suddenly, as he hears a vettura drive up and stop*

before the gate.] Damn it! I'll bet that's the royal pair, now. Can you be ready in an hour?

KUNIE

Yes, I sink so. [*Sighing.*] You are so—

CHARLIE

All right, then! Let 'em come!

[*He looks tensely toward the left. After a moment,* PRINCESS NANETTE DODGE KOSOFF *comes up the steps and on to the terrace. She is a forthright American girl of about twenty-three, dressed in something very recent by Lanvin. She is followed by her cocchiere who carries two modish valises. The moment* NAN *appears,* CHARLES *assumes an air of nonchalant indifference, which he pretty much maintains throughout.*]

NAN

[*Angrily as she sees* CHARLIE]: Well, you're a dandy little playmate, aren't you?

CHARLIE

[*Airily, raising his glass*]: Hello, Princess! How's every little thing along the Volga?

[NAN *darts an angry look at him, then turns to the cocchiere.*]

NAN

Just drop them, anywhere. Eccola.

THE COCCHIERE

Qui?

NAN

Oui. I mean si. Anywhere. That's all right. [*He puts down the bags and she takes a hundred-lire note from her handbag.*] What's the ransom? Quanto?

THE COCCHIERE

[*Belligerently*]: Settante lire.

NAN

No sabe. [*Handing him the note.*] Here, take this and begone. [*Motioning him away.*] Andare!

THE COCCHIERE

[*Effusively*]: Grazie, signorina. Mille grazie!
[*He dashes off.*]

CHARLIE

[*Springing to his feet*]: Hey! Wait a minute! Come back! Aspetto!

[*He runs off, after the cocchiere. A voluble argument ensues offstage.* KUNIE, *who has risen, goes upstage. She and* NAN *size each other up, without*

appearing to notice each other. CHARLIE *comes up the steps, flushed with victory, clutching five or six ten-lire notes.*]

CHARLIE

A hundred lire, forsooth! You bloomin' plutocrats jolly well ruin the country for us.

KUNIE

[*Intercepting him, upstage*]: I shall go now, Sharles.

CHARLIE

[*In a low voice, taking her hand*]: All right, Kunie. Make it as quick as you can.

[NAN *watches them closely.* KUNIE *goes off down the steps.*]

CHARLIE

[*Offering* NAN *the notes*]: Here's your change, Princess.

NAN

[*Stamping her foot, angrily*]: I don't want it!

[*She seats herself in the recliner.* CHARLIE *shrugs his shoulders and pockets the notes. There is a moment of silence, in which they look hostilely away from each other. The head of the cocchiere is*

visible, as the vettura drives by; he is muttering angrily to himself.]

CHARLIE

[*Raising his glass as the cocchiere passes him*]: Same to you.

NAN

[*At length*]: Well, it's lovely to find you *here*, anyhow.

CHARLIE

Thanks. I had an idea that you were rather expecting to find me here.

NAN

[*Furiously*]: To tell you the honest truth, I was rather expecting to find you on the boat-landing.

CHARLIE

Boat-landing? What boat-landing? Pardon me if I don't seem to follow you. You Slavs are so erratic.

NAN

I suppose you've been too busy to read my telegram.

CHARLIE

Did you honor me with a telegram, Princess? And what is detaining the dear Prince?

NAN

You mean to say that you didn't get the telegram I sent from Naples this morning?

CHARLIE

This morning! You sent a telegram from Naples this morning? Ha! Ha! You didn't expect me to receive that today, did you?

NAN

Well, I'll admit that was the idea.

CHARLIE

In that case, you should have brought it with you. It's the quickest way, by far. Anyhow, today is a saint's day.

NAN

I thought yesterday was a saint's day.

CHARLIE

It was.

NAN

Is every day a saint's day?

CHARLIE

The day after tomorrow isn't. It used to be, but Mussolini has cut them down to five a week.

NAN

Well, it certainly is a lot of fun getting off on that dock. These local muledrivers have a nice friendly way of tearing you limb from limb. I finally said: "Boys, why not shake dice for me, and may the best man win." [*Rising and going toward him.*] And then when I get here, I find you sitting here, guzzling vodka, with the last of the Borgias.

CHARLIE

She's the last of the Hapsburgs. And it isn't vodka. Vodka is *your* national drink.

NAN

[*Going to the table*]: Which is your glass?

CHARLIE

That's it. Do you want a drink?

NAN

[*Taking up the half-emptied glass*]: I have a drink. [*She tastes it and makes a face.*] Boy, what vile stuff. Italian sarsaparilla. [*She drains the glass.*]

CHARLIE

You want to look out for that. It poisons your system.

NAN

Listen, dearie, nothing can poison *my* system, any worse than it is already. I'm so toxic that I blight the shrubbery as I pass by. [*Suddenly seeing the water-color.*] Say, do you see what I see?

CHARLIE

[*Adjusting an imaginary monocle*]: Why, yes—yes, I must confess that I do. [*Imitating* ROWLINSON.] Coming along rather well, isn't it?

NAN

I can't bear it. My cup is full enough as it is. [*She gets up and reverses the painting.*] Now, is there any nook or cosy corner around here, where we can have a nice, quiet little chat?

CHARLIE

You don't like this place? [*Gesticulating.*] Sunny Italy! Lemon-groves and bougainvillea! Sorrento, surnamed la Gentile, the birthplace of Torquato Tasso! The pellucid azure waters of the Mediterranean! Distant Vesuvius, brooding ominously over the peaceful landscape! See Naples and die! Vedi Napoli e poi—

NAN

Oh, shut up! [*Indicating the chess-players.*] Can't we get away from the ping-pong players?

CHARLIE

Oh, that's all right, Princess, that's all right. They don't know a word of any language you speak—in short, they have no English. Anyhow, what is there to talk about?

NAN

There's a lot to talk about. What do you think I'm here for? Just to pass the time?

CHARLIE

Why, it's a matter I've given practically no thought to, Princess.

NAN

No? Well, then, suppose you sit down—and cut the comedy. And stop calling me Princess.

CHARLIE

Oh, beg pardon, I'm sure. I seem to recall reading in that estimable journal, the Paris edition of the New York Herald— Just a moment! [*He produces a clipping from his pocket.*] The very item, I think. [*He reads*]: "Among those seen in the pesage, were Jack Dempsey, the Duchess of York, H. G. Wells, Peggy Hopkins Joyce, Aimee Semple McPherson"— Oh no, wait a minute! I'm on the wrong side! That's the Grand Prix at Longchamps.

NAN

Italy hasn't done much for your humor.

CHARLIE

It didn't need much done for it.

NAN

No, just a quick burial.

[*She snatches the clipping from him and tears it up.*]

CHARLIE

[*With a sudden gleam of hope*]: I trust you're not implying that you didn't marry Prince Chekov?

NAN

Yes, of course, I married him!

CHARLIE

[*Resuming his former manner*]: Well, that's what I thought! For a moment I saw my faith in the Paris edition of the New York Herald tottering, and everything went black before my eyes.

NAN

Oh well, I suppose you have a right to be sore. [*Angrily*]: But it's mostly your own stupid fault.

CHARLIE

[*Raising his eyebrows*]: Tiens, tiens!

NAN

I sent you a wire, telling you that I was going to marry Kosoff and that I'd explain later.

CHARLIE

Oh yes. Now that you mention it, I remember receiving the telegram. I was at Taormina, in the lovely island of Sicily. You should go to Sicily, Princess Karamazoff. There you will find—

NAN

Oh, stop it!

CHARLIE

Unless my memory plays me false, I replied to your telegram.

NAN

Yes, telling me kindly to go to hell, or something snappy like that. That was so helpful.

CHARLIE

It's not my recollection that I was trying to be helpful.

NAN

No, I guess not. But you might have taken the trouble to read my letters, instead of sending them back, unopened. Where did you learn that trick, anyhow?

CHARLIE

We Carrolls always do that, your highness, to the women who break their engagements. I think it's a fine, old, romantic gesture, myself.

NAN

If God ever made a dumber male than you are, it's been my good fortune never to have met him.

CHARLIE

Well now, a signed testimonial to that effect, bearing the royal coronet, would help me a lot, in a business way.

NAN

You didn't think, did you— [*Suddenly indicating the chess-players.*] Say, look, one of those birds just made a move. Is that allowed?

CHARLIE

I think they're just amateurs.

NAN

Well, to get back to the subject—

CHARLIE

Yes, to get back to the subject, where's your new hubby?

NAN

When last seen, he was in the Hotel Crillon, in Paris, France.

CHARLIE

[*With obvious disbelief*]: Oh, yeah?

NAN

[*Looking at him in surprise*]: What do you mean: Oh, yeah? I suppose *you* expect to see him pop out from behind a tree and yell: "Surprise!"

CHARLIE

It wouldn't surprise me a bit. And if you think that's calling you a four-letter word meaning one who prevaricates, why you're entirely welcome.

NAN

[*Furiously*]: Say listen, sweetheart—!

[*She stops abruptly as* ROWLINSON's *voice is heard off-stage left.*]

VON KLAUS

But this is unbelievable—

[*The two men appear on the terrace carrying their wet bathing trunks.* NAN, *upon seeing* VON KLAUS, *shows great surprise.*]

ROWLINSON

This same chap told me that in America there are more divorces than marriages.

VON KLAUS

But I do not see how that can be mathematically possible.

CHARLIE

Well, how was the swim?

VON KLAUS

I found it most agreeable.

ROWLINSON

The water was a bit warmish, I thought. It must have been all of sixty-five degrees, Fahrenheit.

CHARLIE

Oh, I don't think you know—Mr. Rowlinson. Herr von— Sorry, but I don't think I got it.

VON KLAUS

Hugo von Klaus.

CHARLIE

Oh yes; Herr von Klaus. And this is Princess—

NAN

[*Interrupting*]: Miss Nanette Dodge.

[VON KLAUS *clicks his heels together and bows profoundly.*]

ROWLINSON

How do you do, Miss Dodge?

NAN

How do you do?

ROWLINSON

I assume that you're the lady that Mrs. Evans has been expecting.

NAN

Oh, so a Mrs. Evans has been expecting me, has she?

CHARLIE

Yes; she's a great admirer of yours.

NAN

To which Mrs. Evans are you referring, may I ask?

CHARLIE

She's from Ohio.

NAN

No!

CHARLIE

Her sister has diabetes and her daughter-in-law's grandfather was a colonel in the Civil War.

NAN

Oh, *that* Mrs. Evans! And how, may I ask— [*As* LUISA *comes out of the hotel, carrying a vase filled with flowers*]: Say, what wouldn't I give to have *her* looks!

ROWLINSON

[*As* LUISA *goes towards the room, downstage left*]: She really shouldn't be permitted to go about like that. It's not decent. Er—Luisa!

LUISA

[*Stopping and turning*]: Si, si, signore.

ROWLINSON

[*Approaching her and speaking in a very loud voice*]: You should wear more clothing, my girl—more clothing!

LUISA

[*Bewildered*]: Non capisco, signore.

ROWLINSON

That's not a proper way for a girl to go about. [*He pulls at her skirt.*] Troppo—er—troppo—

[LUISA, *thinking she understands, breaks into a radiant and seductive smile.*]

LUISA

[*Cooingly*]: Si, si, signore. Stasera.

[*She enters the room.*]

ROWLINSON

[*Bewildered*]: What does she say?

CHARLIE

She says you should come around this evening.

ROWLINSON

[*Scandalized*]: Why, I—

CHARLIE

You want to be careful, Rowlinson. She murdered one of her lovers about a year ago.

ROWLINSON

[*Agitatedly*]: Why, it's scandalous. Perfectly shocking, you know! They've no moral sense, at all, these Latins. I'll go speak to the proprietress.

[*He waddles into the hotel.*]

VON KLAUS

[*Tapping his head, significantly*]: He is a little mad. Not dangerously, however. But is it true that this young female has killed someone?

CHARLIE

No doubt about it. Fellow lived down near Massa-Lubrense. De'Medici was telling me about it.

NAN

Did she have a reason for killing him, or was it just in fun?

CHARLIE

[*Airly*]: Oh, I don't know. He may have done something to annoy her. She's a hot-blooded little thing.

VON KLAUS

And she was not sent to prison?

CHARLIE

This is Italy. Not only was she triumphantly acquitted, but the local Grover Whalen presented her with the keys to the city.

VON KLAUS

It is true that such things happen in this country.

CHARLIE

Sure, it's true. Matter of fact, anything can happen in Italy, because everything has happened.

VON KLAUS

In Germany, such things cannot happen.

CHARLIE

Maybe that's why Italy is so full of Germans. Well, good people, I'll see you all later!
[*He goes toward the hotel.*]

NAN

[*Anxiously*]: Charlie, where are you going?

CHARLIE

[*Airly*]: Just up to my room, to do a little packing. [*Waving his hand.*] Au revoir! Don't do anything I wouldn't do!
[*He enters the hotel.*]

NAN

Charlie—!
[*She goes toward the hotel.*]

VON KLAUS

[*Intercepting her*]: May I have the pleasure of a word with your highness?

NAN

[*Angrily*]: Don't mention it! And while we're on the subject, my highness would like to know what the idea is, your following me across the length and breadth of Italia redenta? For the past two days you've practically never left my side. I even caught you this morning in the railroad station at Naples, reading a telegram over my shoulder. Now, I know that all Germans have a thirst for knowledge, but this happens to be my sabbatical year, so—

VON KLAUS

If your highness will permit me to explain—

NAN

Well, go ahead.

VON KLAUS

Your highness is perhaps not aware that I have the honor of being in the confidence of his highness—Prince Ivan Ivanovitch Kosoff.

NAN

Well, what about it?

VON KLAUS

His highness telegraphed me at Nice that your highness was presumably on her way here, and requested

that I should apprise him of your highness's exact destination. As your highness may have observed, I was fortunate enough to intercept your highness at Genoa.

NAN

[*Angrily*]: Yes, I observed it, all right.

VON KLAUS

His highness was greatly concerned that no harm should befall your highness.

NAN

Good old Prince. [*Holding out her hand and whistling.*] Here, Prince, Prince, Prince!

VON KLAUS

[*Bowing again*]: It will be of interest to your highness to know that his highness will presently be here, in person!

NAN

[*Completely bowled over*]: What!

VON KLAUS

[*Bowing*]: His highness had proceeded to Nice to await my message. A short time ago I observed the arrival of a seaplane at Sorrento, which undoubtedly conveyed his highness.

NAN

[*Furiously*]: Yes? Well, as long as you're in his confidence, you can tell him when he comes—

VON KLAUS

[*As* MRS. DE'MEDICI *comes out of the hotel*]: If your highness will be so good as to excuse me, I shall attire myself in more fitting garments.

[*He bows and enters the hotel.* LUISA *comes out of the bedroom.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Effusively*]: Excuse me please, Frau Prinzessin, that I have not known before that you were here. [*Angrily to* LUSIA.] Portate il bagaglio alla camera della Princepessa. Subito!

LUISA

[*Going up the steps*]: Si, si, signora.

[*She takes up* NAN'S *bags and strolls toward the bedroom with them.*]

NAN

But, look here—

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Intercepting*]: I have been busy in the kitchen and no one has told me— [*To* LUISA.] Fate presto, indolente miserabile!

LUISA

Si, si, signora.
[*She walks a little faster.*]

NAN

But just a minute! Adagio ma non troppo. Where is she going with my bags?
[LUISA *enters the bedroom.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

To your room, Frau Prinzessin. I have prepared for you the best room in the albergo. It is a large room with two beds—

NAN

How do you mean two beds?

MRS. DE'MEDICI. . .

[*Disturbed*]: You prefer a large bed? Nearly always American ladies like better two beds. But if you and the Herr Prinz prefer—

NAN

[*Emphatically*]: If you'll forgive my saying so, I don't think we quite understand each other, Mrs.—Mrs.—

MRS. DE'MEDICI

I am Signora de'Medici, the proprietress—

NAN

Oh yes! And a glorious name it is, too. But the point I'd like to make is that you seem somehow to have gotten the impression that the Prince and I are, to put it vulgarly, doubling up.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Bewildered*]: Excuse me, but Herr von Klaus has told me—

NAN

[*Angrily*]: I might have suspected his fine Teutonic hand.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Completely at sea*]: You are not expecting the Prince?

NAN

Oh, I'm expecting him all right! But I'm not expecting—

[*She is interrupted by the arrival of a* POSTMAN *who comes up the steps at the left.*]

THE POSTMAN

[*Giving the Roman salute*]: Buon giorno, signora!

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*To* NAN]: Excuse me, please.

[NAN *does not reply, having at this moment caught sight of* KUNIE *who appears on the balcony opposite, and dusts some powder out of a traveling bag.*]

THE POSTMAN

Ho un telegramma per Signor Car*roll.*

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Si, si. É qui.

[CHARLIE *appears on the balcony of the room on the second floor and waves to* KUNIE. *She smiles and motions to him.* NAN *watches them both, covertly.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Taking a purse from her pocket and giving the postman a tip*]: Ecco.

THE POSTMAN

Grazie, signora. A rivederci.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

A rivederci.

[*The* POSTMAN *goes down the steps.* KUNIE *leaves the balcony.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*To* NAN]: Excuse me, please, one moment. It is a telegram for Mr. Carroll.

CHARLIE

For me?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Looking up*]: Oh, Mr. Carroll. There is for you a telegram. I shall bring it up.

CHARLIE

Never mind. I'll be down.

NAN

Tell me, what do I have to do to get back to Sorrento?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*In amazement*]: You are not remaining here?

NAN

No, I don't think I am. It's a lovely place and all that—

MRS. DE'MEDICI

I am so sorry that I have misunderstood about the room—

NAN

Oh, that's all right. It's just my restless temperament. No sooner do I get to a place than I want to move on. It's the pioneer blood in me, I guess.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

I can prepare for you another room.

NAN

If you don't mind, I'll go to Sorrento.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

I am afraid it is already too late.

NAN

Too late? Too late for what?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

In a few minutes the road will be closed.

NAN

How do you mean the road will be closed?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

There is every afternoon— [*As* CHARLIE *comes out of the hotel.*] Here is the telegram, Mr. Carroll. [*He has changed to a dark suit.*]

CHARLIE

Thanks.

[*He opens the telegram.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Excuse me, I must speak to Herr von Klaus.

NAN

Yes, I wish you would! [MRS. DE'MEDICI *enters the hotel.*] What is this about the road being closed?

CHARLIE

[*Reading the telegram*]: There's an automobile race tomorrow from Sorrento to Sant' Agata, and they've been having the try-outs every afternoon, for a week.

NAN

And they close the public highroad to traffic?

CHARLIE

Yep! There's a Fascist guard posted at every house, to keep anybody from going out.

NAN

Well, it's one way of solving the traffic problem, you got to admit that. Whose colossal idea is this?

CHARLIE

Mussolini's, I guess. He's trying to encourage automobile racing.

NAN

Say, who is this Mussolini, anyhow?

CHARLIE

Benito? Why—er—he's an Italian, I believe. Con-

nected in some way with the government, if I'm not mistaken. This telegram is from you. It says: "Am in a hell of a mess and I don't mean maybe. Stop. Go. I will or shall whichever is right arrive at Sorrento on afternoon scow." It's signed "Nan." So you really did send me a telegram from Naples.

NAN

You know what I like about you is your lovely disposition.

CHARLIE

I know. I'm generally admired for it.

NAN

Yes, I'll bet you are.

[*She glances involuntarily at the balcony opposite.* CHARLIE *follows her glance.*]

CHARLIE

[*A little contritely*]: What's all this about being in a mess?

NAN

A lot you care.

CHARLIE

It's the first I've heard about it.

NAN

I've been trying all afternoon to get a few minutes of your valuable time.

CHARLIE

You seem to think I should be grateful to you for coming here.

NAN

You might have the decency to listen to what I've got to say.

CHARLIE

Well, go ahead, I'm listening.

NAN

Thanks a lot.
[*A silence.*]

CHARLIE

Well?

NAN

The best thing I can do is get out of here. Isn't there any way I can get to Sorrento?

CHARLIE

What was the idea of coming, if you want to go, right away?

NAN

The idea, darling, was—Oh, what's the use? I've *got* to get out before that monkey gets here.

CHARLIE

What monkey?

NAN

Kosoff—that's what monkey! He's coming here.

CHARLIE

Mean to say you didn't know it?

NAN

Didn't I tell you I left him in Paris?

CHARLIE

Well, it's damned funny everybody else around here knew about it—and that you were coming, too.

NAN

Nothing funny about it. That other baboon has been following me all the way from Genoa. It seems he's a buddy of the dear prince—and a well-mated pair they are, too.

CHARLIE

Oh, so that's it!

NAN

Yes, that's it. And I'm not anxious to be here when he arrives.

CHARLIE

Don't tell me you and the Prince have had a falling out! Your vessel scarcely launched upon the seas of matrimony and already—

NAN

Gosh, what wouldn't I give to have your ready wit! I suppose *you* think I married that mouzhik because I wanted to.

CHARLIE

I confess it *had* occurred to me. You see, I knew a girl once who married a man because she wanted to and that sort of gave me the idea.

NAN

Oh, do stop scintillating, Mr. Carroll. I explained the whole thing to you, in those letters. It was only on account of Mitzi—

[KUNIE *appears on the balcony opposite, brushes a hat, and disappears.* NAN *sees her, but* CHARLIE *does not.*]

CHARLIE

Mitzi? I don't follow.

NAN

Yes, Mitzi. My one and only sister, Mary Elizabeth Dodge Norton. [*Suddenly.*] And, by the way, who *is* the dark stranger opposite who seems to be going on a long journey?

CHARLIE

Oh, you mean Kunie?

NAN

Oh, I do, do I?

CHARLIE

Yes, her name is Kunegunde Wandl.

NAN

Really? Well, that explains just about everything.

CHARLIE

She's the girl friend of a gent named General Jan Skulany. He's known as the Butcher of Transylvania.

NAN

Is there such a place?

CHARLIE

If there weren't, how could he be the butcher of it?

NAN

Well, I see your point.

CHARLIE

It's only fair to add that it's his enemies who call him that. To his friends, he's known as the Liberator of the Balkans.

NAN

There seems to be a difference of opinion.

CHARLIE

There is.

NAN

Yeah. And I'll bet that gives you and the butcher girl a lot to talk over, doesn't it?

CHARLIE

She's leaving him.

NAN

For you, I suppose.

CHARLIE

Right.

NAN

Turning vegetarian, huh? Well, I'll say she picked some pretty small potatoes, when she picked you.

CHARLIE

Not so good. Try again.

NAN

Accept my congratulations, I'm sure.

CHARLIE

Thanks a lot. We're going to Paris together.

NAN

Well, isn't that lovely! La ville lumière. When do you leave?

CHARLIE

Any minute now.

NAN

Well, don't let me cramp your style!

CHARLIE

You? The charming young American bride of Prince Castoff? Why should you cramp my style?

NAN

[*Furiously*]: You're a fine piece of baloney, aren't you?

CHARLIE

A minute ago, I was a potato. Better make up your mind.

NAN

[*Raging*]: What a faithful swain you turned out to be! The New York Herald scarcely cold in your pocket, and you go joy-riding to Paris, with the Queen of the Abbattoirs. Just a broken-hearted lover, aren't you?

CHARLIE

What did you expect I was going to do?—fall on my sword, gasping your name with my last breath?

NAN

I didn't expect anything—I don't expect anything. As far as I'm concerned you can have eighty Balkan dancing-girls. Go ahead! Go to Paris! Go to Bagdad! Go to hell!

CHARLIE

[*Furiously*]: All right! And I hope to see you there!

[*He quickly enters the house.* NAN, *on the verge of tears, looks after him for a moment, then turns away as she hears a carriage coming along the road.*]

NAN

[*Calling, as* THE COCCHIERE *comes in sight*]: Hey,

boy—carriage! Cocher—or whatever you are! Sorrento!

THE COCCHIERE

[*Wagging his finger*]: Occupato!

NAN

Whoop-ee! [*Waving her arm wildly.*] Viva il Duce!

THE COCCHIERE

[*Waving his hat with enthusiasm*]: Viva Mussolini! [*He drives off. As* NAN *turns away, she encounters* ROWLINSON, *who has just come out of the hotel.*]

ROWLINSON

I say, are you really an admirer of Mussolini?

NAN

[*Looking at him in despair*]: Well, I do think something should be done about his face.

ROWLINSON

It's his throwing people into prison that I don't like.

NAN

Oh, so he throws people into prison, does he?

ROWLINSON

Yes. If people don't agree with him, he shuts them up in prison. Now, I think that's wrong. I think it's

wicked to send people to prison. I think that we should all live together in fraternal love.

NAN

Well, it's a good idea. I think if you'll excuse me I'll go and remove some of the sacred soil of Italy from my epidermis. I suppose, though, that water is something of a luxury here.

ROWLINSON

Oh, there's no running water, you know.

NAN

That's what I meant. Well, maybe I can coax a little stagnant water out of somebody.

ROWLINSON

Well, I think I'll go for a turn in the garden.

[*He goes toward the garden.* NAN *looks after him for a moment, then turns toward the hotel again, as* VON KLAUS *comes out, wearing a linen suit.*]

NAN

[*Angrily, the moment she sees him*]: Say listen, Bismarck, any time I want *you* to make my sleeping arrangements for me, I'll let you know.

VON KLAUS

I regret if I have displeased your highness. I was merely following the instructions— [*An automobile*

going at high speed is heard approaching.] Pardon, I think that his highness is arriving.

NAN

My God, and my bags are still in there!

[*She runs across the terrace to the bedroom.* VON KLAUS *goes to the parapet and looks over. The automobile stops with a grinding of brakes.*]

VON KLAUS

[*As* NAN *comes out of the bedroom with her bags.*] His highness, Prince Ivan Ivanovitch Kosoff!

[*He stands stiffly at attention.* PRINCE IVAN IVANOVITCH KOSOFF *comes up the steps and onto the terrace, followed by his valet* STEPAN, *who carries his luggage.* KOSOFF *is past forty, tall, thin, clean-shaven with close-cropped hair. His clothes are by a London tailor and he wears a monocle. His habitual manner is one of languid weariness. He speaks fluent English-English with a slight Continental accent.*]

KOSOFF

[*Stopping on the upper terrace*]: Ah, there you are, my darling!

[*He comes down toward* NAN *who glares at him malignantly, as the curtain falls.*]

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

[*At the rise of the curtain, the situation is unchanged. The chess-players are absorbed in their game.* KOSOFF *approaches* NAN.]

KOSOFF

[*Drawlingly*]: It is a great happiness to find you here. How are you, my love?
[*He tries to kiss her hand.*]

NAN

[*Angrily snatching her hand away*]: I've never known anyone I like less than you.

KOSOFF

[*Sinking into a chair*]: It has been a most exhausting journey. Tell him where to take the luggage, Hugo.

VON KLAUS

[*Sharply*]: Stepan!

STEPAN

[*Coming to attention*]: Oui, monsieur.

VON KLAUS

[*In atrocious French*]: La chambre par là. Apportez les bagages.
[*He points to the bedroom.*]

STEPAN

Oui, oui, monsieur!
[*He takes up the bags and starts to cross the terrace.*]

KOSOFF

Dojdites do tech por kochda ya pashlleu za vami.

STEPAN

Da, vashe velichestro.
[*He takes the bags into the bedroom.* LUISA *appears at the right with a basket of oranges and crosses the terrace.*]

VON KLAUS

Unfortunately, your highness, there has been a slight misunderstanding with regard to the rooms—

KOSOFF

[*With a wave of his hand, his eyes on* LUISA]: It does not matter. It is not improbable that the Princess and I shall spend the night in Sorrento.
[LUISA *enters the hotel.*]

NAN

Yeah—you in the Morgue, and me in the Tombs.
[MRS. DE'MEDICI *appears at the right carrying a basket of oranges.*]

VON KLAUS

[*To* KOSOFF]: This is the proprietress. [*As* MRS. DE'MEDICI *approaches*]: Signora de'Medici, I have the honor to present his highness, Prince Ivan Ivanovitch Kosoff, whom I have been expecting.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*A little over-awed*]: Guten Tag, Herr Prinz.
[KOSOFF *nods languidly.*]

VON KLAUS

His highness will occupy for the night the room I have reserved; unless he should decide that he will not.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Yes. Thank you. Thank you so much. [*A little awkwardly to* NAN.] And does the Frau Prinzessin—

NAN

The Frau Prinzessin is spending the night by her lonesome in Sorrento. Moscow papers please copy.

VON KLAUS

It did not occur to me that her highness in accordance with the American custom, desired to occupy a separate—

NAN

[*Interrupting*]: All right, Baedeker, when I become mistress of the White House, I'll hire you as my official spokesman. [*To* MRS. DE'MEDICI.] For the present, I should like a room where I can park my bags, and, in accordance with the American custom, wash my hands.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Very good, Frau Prinzessin, I shall prepare at once a room.

NAN

Splendid. [*Pointing upstage.*] And on *that* side of the building, if you will be so good.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Thank you so much.

NAN

Don't mention it. It's nothing at all.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*To* KOSOFF]: And does the Herr Prinz wish for champagne with his dinner?

KOSOFF

Champagne? I really don't know. Hugo, do you think I shall want champagne with my dinner?

VON KLAUS

Perhaps, it would be best, if I first examined the cellar of the establishment, your highness.

KOSOFF

Yes, I think that would be best. I can only drink a very dry champagne, you know.

[*Meanwhile, a* FASCIST GUARD, *carrying a rifle, has come up the steps and onto the terrace. He is a boy of nineteen. He wears a black silk shirt, a fez-like hat, with a tassel and breeches of olive-drab.*]

VON KLAUS

[*Bowing*]: Naturally, your highness.

THE GUARD

Buon giorno, Signora de'Medici!

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Turning*]: Buon giorno.

THE GUARD

Il corso comincierà subito. Bisogna chiudere la porta.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Si, si, capisco. Benissimo.

THE GUARD

A rivederci.

[*The* GUARD *goes away.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

He is coming to tell me that the motor-car race is soon commencing and that no one must go on the road.

NAN

What time does the ball game between the married men and the single men go on?

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Puzzled*]: Please?

NAN

Nothing. Just an ill-advised attempt at humor.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*To* KOSOFF]: Does your highness wish for something else?

KOSOFF

I think I should like to have one of those oranges.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Certainly, Herr Prinz.

[*She takes the basket over to him.*]

KOSOFF

[*Carefully picking over the oranges*]: Do you think an orange will harm me, Hugo?

VON KLAUS

I do not think so, your highness. They ripen thoroughly in the sun here.

KOSOFF

[*Selecting two aranges and placing them on the table before him*]: That will do.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

One moment, Herr Prinz! I shall fetch a plate! [*Then remembering her duties as a hostess.*] Frau Prinzessin, do you wish an orange, perhaps?

NAN

[*Savagely*]: Thanks. I only eat raw meat.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

I shall fetch a plate, at once, Herr Prinz.

[*She bustles into the house, carrying the basket of oranges.*]

KOSOFF

[*To* VON KLAUS]: Have you explained, Hugo, that with the roast, I require a good, sound Burgundy?

NAN

[*Fiercely to* KOSOFF]: What you require is a good, sound sock in the eye!

[*She picks up a chair and bangs it down upon the terrace. The men look at her;* VON KLAUS *with astonished disapproval,* KOSOFF *with pained annoyance.* LUISA *comes out of the hotel, carrying a plate, a knife and fork, and a napkin.*]

LUISA

[*Putting the plate, knife and fork on the table and spreading the napkin on* KOSOFF's *lap*]: Scusi, signore.

KOSOFF

[*Ogling her*]: Merci, ma petite.

[*He runs his hand down her bare arm.* LUISA *smiles radiantly, then takes up* NAN's *bags and goes into the hotel.* KOSOFF *follows her with his eyes;* NAN *watches him with angry contempt.*]

NAN

Prince Charming or the servant-girl's delight.

KOSOFF

I have never been able to resist a beautiful woman, my darling. It is one of my many weaknesses.

NAN

Well, it's rough on the beautiful women. Now look here, Ivan—

KOSOFF

Excuse me a moment, my darling. Hugo!

[*He beckons to* VON KLAUS *who comes over to him.* KOSOFF *takes him by the lapels and pulls him down, so that he can whisper to him. For several moments they engage in inaudible conversation, while* VON KLAUS *peels the orange and* NAN *looks on impatiently.*]

KOSOFF

I think, Hugo, that I should like to speak privately to the Princess. Is there some place—

VON KLAUS

I am afraid that this is the best place available, your highness.

KOSOFF

[*Waving a hand toward the chess-players*]: But these persons—

VON KLAUS

Fortunately, your highness, they do not understand English.

NAN

Anything I have to say to you, I'd be glad to broadcast to three continents.

KOSOFF

[*Picking up the knife and one of the oranges*]: Very well; you may leave us now, Hugo.
[*He stares helplessly at the orange.*]

VON KLAUS

[*Hurrying forward again*]: Permit me, your highness.
[*He slices the orange for* KOSOFF.]

NAN

Well, I'll be—! Still, I suppose the little dear must have his vitamins.

VON KLAUS

So, your highness.

KOSOFF

Thank you, Hugo.

VON KLAUS

I shall occupy myself with inquiries concerning the wines, your highness.
[KOSOFF *sighs and puts a slice of orange in his mouth.*]

NAN

[*To* VON KLAUS *as he enters the hotel*]: And you might run down to the grocer's and get him a box of animal crackers.

KOSOFF

Hugo is right; this orange is excellent. [*Stretching his arms.*] Ah, the warm Italian sun! It is not to be wondered that we Russians are a melancholy race, reared as we are in a land of snow and darkness.

NAN

[*Seating herself opposite him*]: Come on, Dostoieffsky, let's get down to cases.

KOSOFF

[*Languorously*]: What animation you have—what grace! Ah, Anushka, je t'adore!
[*Throughout he slowly eats the orange, slice by slice.*]

NAN

Yeah? Well, I don't adore you; so I don't think we'll get together on that basis. What I want to know is; just what is your idea in following me here?

KOSOFF

I have come to take you home, ma chère. [*He sighs.*] It has been a most exhausting journey. I loathe flying.

NAN

[*Patiently*]: Ivan dear, I know that Nature didn't give you much of a break in the way of mental equipment—

KOSOFF

Do not oppose me, Anushka. I must have you. I must have you. I am a weakling, my darling. We Kosoffs are all weaklings. For sixteen centuries we have been weaklings. If we do not have what we want we are unhappy. It is our destiny.

[NAN's *reply is completely lost in the roar of a racing-car which tears by on the road with the muffler open.* NAN claps her hands to her ears. KOSOFF *leans back with his eyes closed.*]

NAN

[*As the noise subsides*]: This is going to be perfect. I don't know when I've had such a restful day.

KOSOFF

Turn, Anushka, turn!

NAN

[*Jumpily*]: What's the matter?

[*She turns quickly.*]

KOSOFF

It is only that I wished to see your profile and the charming curves of your throat.

NAN

[*Angrily*]: You big nit-wit!

KOSOFF

Comme tu es belle, ma petite! [*Suddenly rising and approaching* NAN *with outstretched arms.*] Anushka, my adored one! I worship you!
[NAN *rises to avoid his embrace.*]

NAN

[*Kicking him viciously in the shin*]: And see how you like it.
[KOSOFF *makes a grimace of pain and hobbles back to his chair.*]

KOSOFF

You are right. I am a pitiable object. Why do I continue to live? What is the meaning of life? No one has ever been able to tell us. We are born, we suffer, we die. What is there to distinguish us from the beasts of the field? Only our immortal souls, which we receive from God. But I no longer believe in God, Anushka. I am an unhappy man, my cherished one. An exile from

my native Russia! And the faith in God which my mother gave me, I have lost that, too.

[*He takes out his handkerchief, blows his nose sonorously, and wipes his eyes.* NAN *looks at him, completely baffled and bewildered. Then she sighs deeply and taking up her chair moves it with careful deliberation away from the table, and seats herself.*]

NAN

[*Very sweetly*]: Listen, Ivan the Terrible, there's something about you that appeals to my maternal instinct. So I'm going to talk to you, very slowly and very distinctly, in nice little words of one syllable that wouldn't hurt a fly. Is that all right?

KOSOFF

Ah, mon ange! Ta voix douce! Ta chair délicieuse! [*He rubs his injured shin.*]

NAN

[*Whistling*]: Phew-ew! Pay attention now. [*She holds up a forefinger.*] Look, just keep your eye fixed on this. It'll make it easier for you to concentrate. Now try to think back, very hard, and maybe you'll remember a conversation we had in London about four weeks ago: you and I and Sister Mitzi—

KOSOFF

[*Eating the last remaining slice of the orange*]: Ah, Mitzi! She was beautiful, too. But she had not your soul.

NAN

No, she always had her own. That's the way we were brought up—a soul apiece all the way around. [MRS. EVANS *is heard offstage right, humming the refrain of Giovanezza.*] But you *do* remember, don't you, about our conversation? [*As* MRS. EVANS *appears at the right and crosses the terrace.*] Sweet Moses, here's Mrs. Thomas Cook.

[*She rises and going over to the recliner, seats herself in it.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*Bustling up*]: Well, good afternoon! I guess you must be Miss Nanette Dodge.

NAN

Yes, I am—if I do say so, myself.

MRS. EVANS

I thought you must be. You *do* look a little like your pictures, after all.

NAN

Well, anyhow, I make an honest effort to.

MRS. EVANS

I *never* take a good picture, myself. My friends always say: "My goodness, is that supposed to be you!" Well, it certainly is a pleasure to meet you, Miss Dodge. But, I shoudn't be calling you Miss Dodge, should I, now that you're Princess Ivanoff. And I suppose this is Prince Ivanoff?

NAN

Well—practically.

MRS. EVANS

How do you do, Prince Ivanoff? I'm *very* glad to know you.

KOSOFF

[*With a deep sigh*]: It is a great happiness.

MRS. EVANS

[*Seating herself*]: I suppose I really should introduce myself. I'm Mrs. Evans and I'm an American.

NAN

It's the country of the future.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, I wouldn't think of living anywhere but in America.

NAN

That's what I mean.

MRS. EVANS

These foreign places are lovely to visit and all that —but when you see the way they live! No, *thank you!* Well, it's certainly exciting to meet a real prince. That doesn't happen *every* day in the week.

NAN

You're right! There's always that!

MRS. EVANS

[*To* KOSOFF, *explanatorily*]: Of course, we don't have princes or anything like that in America.

NAN

I'm beginning to feel a little homesick.

MRS. EVANS

Well, it's only natural for a young girl to feel that way when she's first married. My goodness, I remember when Mr. Evans and I first settled in Columbus, I just used to cry my eyes out, thinking about Akron. But you soon get over that. It's the old story that a woman has to leave the home she was raised in, to cleave to her husband.

NAN

I don't mind a story being a little old, as long as it's funny.

MRS. EVANS

[*A little uncertainly*]: That's right. You young girls have the right idea. Always take a cheerful view of things. And Prince, I want to tell you that I think you're a very lucky man. American girls make wonderful wives. Well, you couldn't have selected a lovelier spot for your honeymoon.

KOSOFF

Do you think so? I find it very melancholy. The blue sky, the flowers, the sea—and we have so few years in which to enjoy them all.
[*He sighs profoundly.*]

MRS. EVANS

Why, that's no way for a young married man to talk. I'm sure your wife doesn't like that. American girls always like to look on the bright side. Don't they, Mrs. Ivanoff?

NAN

Whenever they can find it.

MRS. EVANS

Certainly. [*Rising and going over to* KOSOFF.] You should be more cheerful about things, if not for your own sake, then for hers. That's one thing about our American men, they know that the most precious gift in the world is a girl's love and so they try to do everything they can to make things easy for their wives. [*As* CHARLIE *comes out of the hotel carrying his suitcase.*] Goodness, Mr. Carroll, you're not leaving us, are you?

CHARLIE

'Fraid so.

MRS. EVANS

Why, what a shame! And just when such distinguished guests are with us. I want you to meet Princess—

CHARLIE

Thanks. I've met the Princess.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, have you? And the Prince, too, I suppose?

CHARLIE

No, I haven't had the honor.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, well, then, allow me. Prince Ivanoff, this is Mr. Carroll, a young American gentleman. [*The two men nod distantly.*] I know it must be a pleasure for you to meet a fellow-countryman of your wife.

NAN

Yes, you two boys really should know each other.

MRS. EVANS

Are you leaving right away, Mr. Carroll?

CHARLIE

On the boat for Naples.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, then, perhaps you'll mail some letters for me, in Naples.

CHARLIE

Yes, sure—anything!

MRS. EVANS

I'll go and address the envelopes right away. And you do all you can to make Prince Ivanoff and his little wife feel at home.

[*She enters the hotel.*]

NAN

Why certainly, Mr. Carroll! Come and join our little family circle. Perhaps you would like to tell us an amusing anecdote or two. A great traveler like you—[*As* KOSOFF *rises, wearily.*] Where are *you* going?

KOSOFF

I think I shall retire to my room, Anushka.

Nan

[*Intercepting him*]: I think you shall not! There are a lot of things about my married life that I don't like—you, chiefly—and you're going to stay right here until we get 'em fixed up. So just sit down and make yourself comfy. [*Angrily, as* KOSOFF *sinks resignedly back into a chair.*] I'm awfully sorry to inconvenience you two, but this thing is kind of important to me, however much it bores you.

CHARLIE

Well, go ahead. I'm willing to listen to anything you've got to say.

NAN

Gosh, you are a fine, big-hearted fellow, after all.

CHARLIE

Oh, come on, you've made enough cracks about me.

[KUNIE *appears on the balcony opposite and tries to attract* CHARLIE'S *attention.*]

NAN

If you'd had intelligence enough—

CHARLIE

[*Seeing* KUNIE]: Excuse me a minute.

[*He goes to the parapet.* NAN *and* KOSOFF *watch him; she with intense jealousy, he with great interest.*]

CHARLIE

[*Shouting across to* KUNIE]: Be ready in fifteen minutes. We'll have to walk around by the back road.

[KUNIE'S *reply is drowned in the roar of a racing-car.* GENERAL SKULANY *appears on the balcony. He is a bullet-headed Slav, who wears the blouse of a Rumanian peasant.* SKULANY *seizes* KUNIE *roughly by the arm and pulls her out of sight.* CHARLIE *turns away, evidently troubled.*]

CHARLIE

[*Turning his attention to* NAN *again.*] Well, what about all the explaining you want to do?

NAN

Oh, what's the use?

CHARLIE

Well, suit yourself. You're the one that's been shouting for a chance to explain. [*A pause.*] Anyhow, it's what you came here for, isn't it?

NAN

I didn't expect to find you in the arms of a Balkan enchantress.

CHARLIE

And what about you and the dear Prince? You keep forgetting that little detail.

NAN

Can't you get it through your thick head that I couldn't hate him more if I were related to him?

CHARLIE

Then, why did you marry him?

NAN

I'd tell you if you could manage to give me your attention for five minutes.

CHARLIE

Something about your sister Mitzi. Well?

NAN

Yes, a lot about my sister Mitzi. She had an affair

with him in Paris, during the War, and she was damn fool enough to write him a bunch of letters and if I may say so, what letters!

CHARLIE

Oh, blackmail, huh?

NAN

You have *such* a quick mind!

KOSOFF

A Kosoff could never be a blackmailer. Surely, it is not my fault that the Soviets have robbed me of my paternal estate.

NAN

Well, thank heaven, no one can rob you of your sterling character. [*To* CHARLIE]: The dear boy showed up in London, about a month ago and pointed out to Mitzi what hot reading the letters would make, if judiciously circulated among the right people.

CHARLIE

The last of the Romanoffs.

NAN

I hope so. Well, you can readily imagine Mitzi, with

her two kids, named respectively Sonny and Baby, and her husband named Thomas Norton. She threw a duck-fit and came and spilled the whole thing to me. Well, we figured out how we could raise a reasonable amount of money, between us, but when Ivan the Terrible began to talk in eight and nine figures, we were just about sunk.

CHARLIE

So you—!

NAN

[*Holding up her hand*]: Presently, presently. Unless you'd rather tell this story, yourself.

CHARLIE

Sorry.

KOSOFF

Do you think it is from choice that I go about selling letters to people? I find it a most exhausting business. [*He sighs deeply.*] Most exhausting.

NAN

Poor boy! [*To* CHARLIE]: Where were we? Oh yes! We told him we couldn't make the grade. But dear Ivan, who is nothing if not resourceful, had discovered that I was to get a sizable chunk of money from father's

estate, when I gave my lily-white hand in marriage. So, he was good enough to say, that while he really hadn't figured on being compelled to take me along with the money, he was willing to go out of his way, to that extent, to oblige a couple of ladies.

CHARLIE

And you let yourself—!

NAN

Whoa, boy, whoa!

CHARLIE

Go on.

NAN

Thanks. Well, me, I made a courtesy, and I said no and Mitzi, she said no, also. But that very night, what does little Nan come upon, but sister Mitzi, in the act of imbibing one gallon of iodine.

CHARLIE

No!

NAN

Ah, but yes, monsieur. Well, sir, the Dodges have never been iodine-drinkers. So I had another pow-wow with the big Slav, and finally we fixed it up between us, that he was to lead me to the altar, get the cash; and

in a couple of months or so, I was to get a Paris divorce.

CHARLIE

Well, I'll say that that was a hell of a mess to let yourself in for!

NAN

Well, you see, darling, I didn't have the benefit of your sage advice. You were taking the waters on your Sicilian estates at the moment.

CHARLIE

You could have—

NAN

Listen, Charlie boy, don't tell me what I could have done or should have done. Between Mitzi reaching for the iodine bottle on one side of me, and Ivan Ivanovitch flourishing the letters on the other side, there was nothing to do but to get it settled—and in a hurry, at that.

CHARLIE

Mitzi had no right to let you—

NAN

Oh, she made enough fuss about it. She said she wouldn't have it, and I said she would, and she said she wouldn't and I said she would, and it went on like that

for hours until finally I got a decision on points. But brother-in-law Tom was really magnificent—the balmy idiot! You have a staunch friend in Tom Norton, my lad. You should have heard him, when I told him I was marrying Ivan. He made perfectly beautiful speeches about the heartlessness of the modern American girl; and how, for the sake of a title she will cast aside a fine, wholesome, upstanding chap—that's you, dear heart!

[KOSOFF *takes up the remaining orange and pokes helplessly at it with his knife.*]

CHARLIE

Thanks.

NAN

It's Tom's description, not mine. Yes, cast aside, etcetera and give yourself to a half-witted, impecunious, degenerate, foreign rotter—

KOSOFF

He is an illiterate barbarian, this Thomas Norton.

[*He pokes at the orange again.*]

NAN

[*To* CHARLIE]: Ivan and Tom don't like each other.

[*Impatiently*]: Here, for heaven's sake, Kosoff, give that thing to me!

[*She snatches the knife and orange from him and starts to peel the orange.*]

KOSOFF

[*Gratefully*]: Thank you, my darling.

NAN

[*With sudden anger*]: No, I'll be damned if I do!
[*She turns and hurls the orange into the bedroom.* KOSOFF *sighs and closes his eyes.*]

NAN

[*To* CHARLIE]: Well, not to keep you too long from your little friend across the way, we were quietly united in holy wedlock on Monday.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I read about it.

NAN

So you did. Apparently you read everything but letters.

CHARLIE

So, it was just a formal marriage, to cover the money deal, is that the idea? I mean you haven't—I mean you're—I mean you didn't—
[*He breaks off in embarrassment.*]

NAN

[*Equally embarrassed*]: That's the boy, be tactful

about it. [*With sudden anger*]: What the hell business is it of yours, I'd like to know? But listen to me, Lord Chesterfield, if I *am* all that a nice girl should be, it isn't any thanks to my prince.

CHARLIE

What do you mean by that?

NAN

He loves me. I'm his angel. [*Gesticulating*]: My eyes. My hairs. My voice sweet. My skin delicious.

CHARLIE

Say, I'd like to get to know that boy!

NAN

Well, I must bring you together some time. You're scarcely his social equal though. [*Seating herself*]: So when we got to Paris he informed me that he had conceived a great passion for me. He also informed me that he had taken the precaution of retaining photographic copies of the letters and that, for trading purposes, they were practically as good as the originals. You follow me, I take it?

CHARLIE

Yes, I follow you all right.

KOSOFF

You have stolen the photographic copies, Anushka. You entered my room and stole them. It was not honorable, my darling.

[NAN *stares at him for a moment in open-mouthed astonishment.*]

NAN

[*Struggling for words*]: You—! [*She breaks off.*] God, what an inadequate language English is.

KOSOFF

I should like to have the photographs back again. Please be good enough to tell me where they are.

NAN

With pleasure. They're at the bottom of the Bay of Naples.

KOSOFF

[*With a sigh*]: I was afraid that you would destroy them.

NAN

You Russians are positively psychic. [*To* CHARLIE]: Well, I had a lovely night in the Hotel Crillon, with my big he-man whining and scratching at my door. And in the cold gray A. M., while hubby was having his im-

perial bath, I rummaged among his effects and found the pretty pictures—negatives, positives, expletives and all.

CHARLIE

You ought to have your head examined.

NAN

All right, Doc, whatever you say. [*To* KOSOFF]: Now, just what is it that you have in mind? You know damned well that I'd commit hari-kari before I'd have any Kosoff within eleven kilometers of me. So suppose we just settle down to a nice quiet little divorce and call it a day?

KOSOFF

It is impossible, my darling.

NAN

What do you mean, impossible? You got your money, didn't you?

KOSOFF

Ah, money, money! In that respect, my darling, you are like all the other Americans. You think only of money.

NAN

I know it. Materialism is the curse of American civili-

zation. We are a pioneer people, as yet untouched by the refining influence of European culture. Money is our God. Take, for example, an American blackmailer and how does he behave? You strike a bargain with him, he gets his money and he turns over the letters. Does he keep photographic copies of them? No! Why not? Because he is a crude fellow, with no feeling for art and no understanding of the higher things of life. You, on the other hand—

KOSOFF

[*Putting his hand to his forehead*]: You weary me, Anushka.

NAN

[*Maternally*]: You poor lamb! But I'll get my divorce—and try to stop me!

KOSOFF

[*Sighing deeply*]: Anushka, do not make me go again to London to see Mitzi's husband. I dislike London and I dislike this Thomas Norton. It would be most distasteful and tiresome to be obliged to explain to him the reasons—

NAN

Honest, Ivan, you wouldn't be as low as that, would you? You couldn't be.

KOSOFF

I find this conversation most fatiguing. [*He looks about.*] Where has Hugo gone? I feel the need of a glass of port.

[CHARLIE, *without a word, suddenly strides over to the astonished* KOSOFF, *seizes him by the collar, jerks him to his feet, and hits him in the jaw. It is not a very hard blow, but it makes* KOSOFF *sit down quite suddenly on the pavement.*]

NAN

[*To* CHARLIE]: You shouldn't do that to him. I don't think he likes it. [*As a racing-car roars by*]: And you were right about the automobile race. It's on. [*To* KOSOFF]: Ivan dear, I think you should get up. You'll catch your death of cold sitting there on those stones. [*Going over to him.*] Come on, sugar-plum, give mamma your little hand. [*He takes her outstretched hand.*] Oop-la! [*She pulls him to his feet.*] Tha-at's it!

CHARLIE

[*Menacingly*]: I think I'll knock him down again.

NAN

[*Intervening*]: No, don't, Charlie! It's so much trouble getting him up. [*As* KOSOFF *starts uncertainly in the wrong direction*]: No, no! The other way, sweet-

heart. [*She turns him around.*] See where those French windows are? Well, right in there. Just follow this crack in the pavement and you can't miss it. That's right— [*As* KOSOFF *enters the room at the left*]: And tell Stepan to dust off the seat of your pants.
[STEPAN *closes the French windows.*]

CHARLIE

[*Looking after him*]: Say, what do you suppose ever made me soak him like that? It's the first time in my life I ever hit anybody.

NAN

I know. He affects people that way. He's like an old hat on the sidewalk. You can't see him without wanting to kick him. It's just swell being married to him.
[*She sits down suddenly and begins to cry.*]

CHARLIE

[*Going to her*]: Why, you poor old bambina!
[*He fondles her hair.*]

NAN

[*Miserably*]: Old crybaby, you mean. [*As* CHARLIE, *remembering* KUNIE, *wrenches himself away*]: Come, come, my girl, no weakness! [*She wipes her eyes.*] Well, that, in brief, is my story.

CHARLIE

Gosh, you're certainly in a hell of a mess. He can block a Paris divorce.

NAN

Well, I thought of that point myself.

CHARLIE

He could even follow you back to America and throw a wrench into the machinery there.

NAN

Don't I know it?

CHARLIE

Of course, if you told a court the whole story—

NAN

You mean spill everything about Mitzi and all?

CHARLIE

Well, it's every man for himself, if you ask me.

NAN

But not if you ask me.

CHARLIE

Where is Mitzi? In London?

NAN

Uh-huh. I shot her a wire, telling her I'm on my way here. But what do you think she's going to do for me?

CHARLIE

She ought to do something. She got you into this.

NAN

She did *not*, Charlie. I got myself into it.

CHARLIE

There's another point. I don't know what your standing is, as a citizen, under the Italian law and the British law and the Russian law—not to mention the American law.

NAN

Oh go on and mention it.

CHARLIE

[*Suddenly*]: I'm going to telephone.

NAN

Now, that's the best solution I've heard to date.

CHARLIE

The American consul in Naples ought to be able to

give you some advice. I'll see if Mrs. de'Medici can get him on the phone.

NAN

Maybe I could hire the little Italian girl to bump Ivan off.

CHARLIE

No, she only commits crimes of passion. Maybe you ought to get out of Italy.

NAN

What? Leave sunny Italy? Banyan trees and tse-tse flies. The glorious Taj Mahal, last resting-place of Madame de Pompadour! Look, why don't you just go ahead. I just wanted to give you the facts, that was all. I didn't expect you to do anything about it.

CHARLIE

I want to do anything I can to get you out of this jam. [NAN *does not answer.*] Why won't you be reasonable about it?

NAN

You mean, inspired by *your* exhibition of reasonableness?

CHARLIE

Anybody else in my position—

NAN

You'll miss your boat.

CHARLIE

Oh, cut it out, can't you? If you'd had sense enough to telegraph me from Paris—

NAN

You mean you could have left here, yesterday.

CHARLIE

That isn't what I mean at all. And you know damned well it isn't. The trouble with you is that like all women—

NAN

Attaboy! Go on and tell me about all women.

CHARLIE

I'm going to tell you about yourself—

[*A scream is heard from the road.*]

KUNIE'S VOICE

Sharles! Sharles!

CHARLIE

Gosh, that's Kunie.

[*He runs across the terrace and down the steps.*]

NAN

And don't hurry back.

[*Offstage are heard* KUNIE'S *hysterical sobbing and* CHARLIE'S *altercation with the guard, at the gate. Finally, the argument ends abruptly, the gate creaks open and shuts again.* NAN, *who has been watching, enters the hotel, angry and hurt as* CHARLIE *and* KUNIE *come up the steps.* KUNIE *is still sobbing and her face shows a red bruise.* CHARLIE *carries her valise and has his other arm about her.*]

CHARLIE

[*Comforting* KUNIE]: All right, kid, it's all right. [*Leading her to a chair*]: Just sit down and pull yourself together. There, that's it!

KUNIE

[*Clinging to him*]: Ach, Sharles!

CHARLIE

Never mind, it's all right now. Here, take a drink. [*He offers her her half-finished glass.*]

KUNIE

No, I do not wish for it.

CHARLIE

[*Starting to go*]: Well, let me get you some cognac.

KUNIE

No, Sharles, nossing. Do not go away.

CHARLIE

All right, I'm right here. Only a shot of cognac—

KUNIE

No, please.

CHARLIE

All right, whatever you say. [*Looking about, uneasily*]: Wonder what became of— [*To* KUNIE]: Feel a little better, now?

KUNIE

Yes, soon I will be better.

CHARLIE

Sure you will. What did he do to you, the big bum,— hit you?

KUNIE

Yes, he has struck me here in the face wis his fist.

CHARLIE

Let's see? Why, you poor kid! Does it hurt?

KUNIE

Not so much as before.

CHARLIE

It's all swollen. You ought to— [*He looks about.*] Wait a minute. [*He moistens his handkerchief with soda-water from the siphon.*] Here, put this on it.

KUNIE

[*Complying*]: Sank you, Sharles.

CHARLIE

Maybe I can get Mrs. de'Medici—

KUNIE

No, it is better now. Do not go away.

CHARLIE

What did he do that for, the dirty swine?

KUNIE

When I told him I am going wis you, he sinks right away zat you are one of his enemies and zat I am betraying him.

CHARLIE

Well, I'm one of his enemies, all right. What I ought to do is go over and drop him off the balcony. I've tasted

blood once this afternoon and a Rumanian general is just my dish.

KUNIE

No, you must not do it, Sharles.

CHARLIE

Well, whatever you say.

KUNIE

I am now srough wis him. I will sit here for five minutes and zen we will go, yes?

CHARLIE

Why, I don't know, Kunie. You see, something has come up—

KUNIE

You do not wish to go?

CHARLIE

Sure, I do! I wouldn't have asked you, would I, if I hadn't wanted to?

KUNIE

Zen—?

CHARLIE

It's just something that's come up. You see, Nan—

KUNIE

Oh, ze Prinzessin—!

CHARLIE

Now please don't misunderstand me, Kunie. This has nothing to do with you and me, at all. It's simply that Nan has got herself into an awful jam—. You know what I mean—trouble—difficulty.

KUNIE

But her husband is here, no?

CHARLIE

That's just it! *He's* the difficulty. I can't explain it all now, but he's making things unpleasant for her. And I can't just run off and leave her alone with him, in a strange country, a million miles from anywhere. You see, after all, she and I—

KUNIE

Yes, I know zat. Only you have told me—

CHARLIE

[*Taking her hands*]: Kunie, listen to me. Everything I said to you, goes. We're going to Paris together, just as we arranged. All I'm asking you to do is to wait until tomorrow morning, so as to give me a chance to do something about Nan. You can get a room for the night—

KUNIE

I sink you wish rasser to go wis her, no?

CHARLIE

Now just forget all that, will you? I've told you how I feel about you and what I want to do. Why should I lie about it?

KUNIE

You are caring for me, a little, yes?

CHARLIE

I think you're great! [*Kissing her*]: There, take that! How's the eye?

KUNIE

It is not hurting much now.

CHARLIE

That's good. I hope that when that boy gets to Rumania the place blows up under him. Tell you what you do now, you go up to my room and lie down, while I try to telephone to the American Consul. Wait a minute! First, I want to put the fear of God into that son-of-a-borzoi in there. [*He strides over to* KOSOFF's *bedroom, pushes open the French windows and thrusts his head into the room*]: Listen, little father, I'm on my way to telephone the American consul in Naples. And if

you try any monkey-business, I'll have you thrown to the bolsheviks. [*As* STEPAN *appears and closes the windows*]: And that goes for you, too, you irregular verb! [*To* KUNIE *as he turns away*]: Gosh, it's wonderful the way a plain American citizen like me bosses these foreign potentates around. [*As he sees* MRS. EVANS *approaching from the hotel*]: Low bridge, here's little Miss Columbus. Better go up and lie down, Kunie.
[*He hurries toward the entrance door.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*Encountering him in the doorway*]: Oh, here are the letters, Mr. Carroll.

CHARLIE

[*Hurrying into the house*]: Not going until tomorrow.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, but I thought—! Goodness, young people nowadays never seem to know *what* they want to do. [*Seeing* KUNIE]: Oh, how do you do, Miss Wendell? Why, what's the matter? Did you get something in your eye?

KUNIE

It is nossing.

MRS. EVANS

Why, that's too bad! A cinder or something, I suppose. Well, it's no wonder with all these automobile races. Be careful not to rub it, Miss Wendell. The best thing to do is to pull the lid down tight and rub the *other* eye. [*As the droning of an airplane motor is heard overhead*]: Oh, is that an aeroplane?
[*They both look up.*]

MRS. EVANS

Do you see it, Miss Wendell?

KUNIE

[*Pointing up*]: Yes, zere it is!

MRS. EVANS.

Where? Oh yes, I see it. My, it just makes me shiver every time I see one of those things—. They look so insecure, just up there in the air like that, without any support. I suppose you've heard about Charles Lindbergh, the young American, who flew across the ocean?

KUNIE

Yes, surely.

MRS. EVANS

Wonderful, wasn't it? I always say that I wouldn't

do what he did for all the money in the world. And you know what I liked best about it all was the way he refused to touch a drop of all that wine that those French people tried to make him drink. They can say what they like about us, but American boys do have wonderful strength of character. [*As* ROWLINSON *appears at the left*]: Aeroplane, Mr. Rowlinson. Do you see it?

ROWLINSON

[*Looking up*]: Oh yes! I must say I'm getting rather fed up on airplanes.

KUNIE

[*Seizing this opportunity to escape*]: If you will please excuse me.
[*She goes toward the hotel.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*Shaking her head*]: Poor girl, she has her hands full. From what I hear, the General is a very sick man. Well, Mr. Rowlinson, I had a nice little chat with the Prince and his little wife.

ROWLINSON

Oh, really?

MRS. EVANS

Yes, indeed! They make a charming couple. She's a

lovely little woman—just as quiet and nice as she can be. And he seems very nice, too. Very democratic and all that. Of course, like a lot of these foreigners, he's inclined to be a little gloomy—you know, sort of likes to look on the dark side, but I told him— [*The music of Aïda is heard faintly offstage, as a door somewhere in the house is opened.*] Oh, listen! Is that the radio?

ROWLINSON

Yes, I daresay. They're broadcasting the opera from the San Carlo, in Naples, I believe.

MRS. EVANS

[*Enthusiastically*]: Oh, how exciting! Don't you want to come and hear it?

ROWLINSON

Well, I don't mind. I do think, though, that the opera is rather wicked.

MRS. EVANS

[*Anxiously*]: Oh, do you?

ROWLINSON

Yes, they're always such frightful stories of lust and crime. I don't think such things should be permitted.

MRS. EVANS

Still, they're usually in a foreign language so no one really knows what they're about.

ROWLINSON

Well, at any rate, it's not as harmful hearing them on the radio as it is seeing them in the theatre. I don't approve of the theatre.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, don't you? I *love* to go to the theatre.

ROWLINSON

Well, I used to enjoy it, too, until I discovered that actors are frightfully dishonest persons.

MRS. EVANS

[*Pained*]: Well, I had no idea of that!

ROWLINSON

Yes, they are. They pretend to be somebody that's quite unlike themselves. I saw a play once about the Prophet Jeremiah and afterwards I met the chap who played the principal part and do you know, he wasn't a bit like the Prophet Jeremiah. Now I call that dishonest.

MRS. EVANS

Well, I surely am sorry to hear that about actors—[*Excitedly as the French windows at the left open*]: Wait, maybe this is the Prince.

[KOSOFF *comes out on to the terrace. He has changed to an English lounge-suit. He crosses to the middle of the terrace, then stops to light a cigarette.*]

MRS. EVANS

Well, Prince Ivanoff, I see you're beginning to make yourself at home. I'd like you to meet Mr. Rowlinson.

KOSOFF

[*With a deep sigh*]: It is a great happiness.

ROWLINSON

I'm delighted to meet you, Prince Ivanoff.

MRS. EVANS

Mr. Rowlinson is a great artist.

ROWLINSON

Oh, I say, hardly that!

MRS. EVANS

Now, don't be modest, Mr. Rowlinson. I suppose your charming little wife is having a nap, Prince Ivanoff. After the tiring trip and all.

[KOSOFF *sighs deeply.*]

MRS. EVANS

[*Aside to* ROWLINSON]: He hasn't a very happy disposition, has he? [*To* KOSOFF]: Come along, Prince Ivanoff, with Mr. Rowlinson and me and listen to the opera on the radio. That'll cheer you up a little.

KOSOFF

No, I detest music.

MRS. EVANS

Well, if you change your mind— Come along, Mr. Rowlinson.

[*She and* ROWLINSON *enter the hotel.* KOSOFF *looks about helplessly for a moment. Then his attention is attracted to* LUISA, *who comes out of the hotel. He stares at her as she removes the glasses and siphon. Then, as she approaches the hotel, he coughs slightly.* LUISA *instantly stops and turns.* KOSOFF *approaches her, but at the moment* VON KLAUS *comes out of the hotel. His face and clothes are streaked with dust and he carries a dusty bottle under each arm and another in his right hand.* KOSOFF *motions to* LUISA *to go away. She turns obediently and enters the hotel.*]

KOSOFF

Ah, Hugo! I have been searching everywhere for you.

VON KLAUS

[*Putting the bottles on a table*]: A thousand pardons, your highness. I have been in the wine-cellar of the establishment. The stock of French wines is regrettably insufficient, but I have been fortunate enough to discover two bottles of Chambertin and a very excellent Château Yquem.

KOSOFF

[*Examining the labels*]: The Chambertin is nineteen hundred twelve. A poor year. [*Sighing*]: Ah yes, I should have remained in Paris. Hugo, I think it will be necessary to abduct the Princess.

VON KLAUS

[*Bowing*]: Very good, your highness.

KOSOFF

I have had a most unsatisfactory conversation with her. [*Sighing deeply*]: She is most difficult, Hugo. Nevertheless, Hugo, it is quite impossible for me to live without her.

VON KLAUS

Naturally, your highness.

KOSOFF

On the other hand, I find the presence of this young American—what is his name?

VON KLAUS

Carroll, your highness.

KOSOFF

Yes, I find his presence most offensive. I think it best to remove the Princess from his influence. My cousin Anton Pavlovitch is occupying a villa near Rome. I think it would be best to proceed there.

VON KLAUS

I understand, your highness. And when does your highness desire to depart?

KOSOFF

Oh, at once, Hugo, at once. I find that the air here weighs heavily upon my spirit. [*Raising his arms*]: Ah, if it would only snow!

VON KLAUS

Has your highness given any consideration to the means whereby— [*Suddenly as* NAN's *voice is heard offstage left*]: Here is the Princess, your highness!

[*He whispers rapidly to* KOSOFF, *pointing several times to the room at the left.* KOSOFF *nods languidly.* VON KLAUS *crosses the terrace and enters the room, half closing the French windows, as* NAN *comes out of the hotel carrying her valises.*]

NAN

[*Seeing* KOSOFF]: Oh, you're the very boy I'm looking for.
[*She puts down her valises.*]

KOSOFF

Ah, comme tu es charmante, mon amie!

NAN

[*Approaching him*]: It may interest you to know that I'm going into Sorrento for a little privacy. But before I go, I'd like to find out just what it is you want.

KOSOFF

[*Stretching out his arms*]: You, mon âme. I want only you.

NAN

Stop it, will you! Can't you talk sense for a minute? Look, Ivan, you didn't honestly mean that about going to London, did you?

KOSOFF

Come with me to Rome, ma colombe, mon ange!
[*He tries to put his arms about her.*]

NAN

[*Angrily, freeing herself*]: Lay off, Macduff!

[*To avoid* KOSOFF *she faces about and retreats toward the left.* LUISA *appears in the entrance to the hotel, and stands looking on, in frank amusement.*]

KOSOFF

[*Advancing towards* NAN]: Anushka, my adored one!

NAN

[*Retreating*]: Honest, if you touch me again, I'll knock you flat!

[*As she retreats toward the left, her back to the bedroom, the French windows open quickly and* STEPAN *and* VON KLAUS *step out.* STEPAN *clasps his hand over* NAN'S *mouth and the two men drag her quickly into the room and close the windows. It is all over in a second.* KOSOFF *watches, languidly;* LUISA *in open-mouthed astonishment.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI'S VOICE

[*Sharply*]: Luisa!

LUISA

Si, si, signora!

[*She turns to enter the hotel, as* DE'MEDICI *comes out. He takes her in his arms and kisses her.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI'S VOICE

Luisa!

LUISA

Si, si, signora!

[*She frees herself, laughingly, from* DE'MEDICI *and enters the hotel.* DE'MEDICI *laughs happily and bursts into song. Then he comes down to the recliner, picks up the guitar and strums an accompaniment to the melody.* KOSOFF *seats himself wearily at the right.*]

[*The curtain falls slowly*]

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

At the rise of the curtain, the situation is unchanged. The chess-players are absorbed in their game. KOSOFF *drops off to sleep, then awakens with a start, as a racing-car roars by.* DE'MEDICI *is drowsily strumming. The French windows open.* VON KLAUS *steps out and closes the windows behind him.*

VON KLAUS

Hoheit!

KOSOFF

[*Turning*]: Ach, it is you, Hugo!

VON KLAUS

Pardon, your highness, but I find it necessary to consult your highness—

KOSOFF

Why can I never be left to self-contemplation? Ah well, it is the penalty of my position.

VON KLAUS

I deeply regret, your highness—

KOSOFF

It does not matter, Hugo, it does not matter. What does Pushkin say? But that does not matter, either. [DE'MEDICI *drops off to sleep.*]

VON KLAUS

It is imperative, your highness, to consider the means of conveying the princess to your cousin's villa.

KOSOFF

I leave all that to you, Hugo. Do you agree with me, Hugo, that Americans are an unpleasant race?

VON KLAUS

I find them insufferable, your highness. Is it your highness' desire that I should engage a motor-car?

KOSOFF

Yes. But not the sort that brought me here from Sorrento.

VON KLAUS

I am afraid that the vicinity offers nothing better, your highness.

KOSOFF

[*Clutching his head*]: Ach, it seems that I am al-

ways doomed to defeat! Why do I not end my miserable existence? It would be so simple—so simple!

VON KLAUS

Something has, at this moment, occurred to me, your highness. I have observed that the gentleman who occupies the villa across the road—he is a Rumanian general, your highness—is the possessor of an excellent Hispano-Suiza motor-car. It has occurred to me that if your highness would be willing to purchase the motor-car—

KOSOFF

[*Wearily*]: Whatever is necessary, Hugo.

VON KLAUS

Naturally, I do not know if the motor-car is for sale.

KOSOFF

If he is a Rumanian general, everything that he has is for sale.

VON KLAUS

Very good, your highness. The motor-car can then be held in readiness at the garden gate. I shall visit the General now and endeavor— No, upon second thought, your highness, it would be better if your highness would condescend to negotiate in person, with the General. Your highness' rank and bearing—

KOSOFF

[*Resignedly*]: Very well, [*Helplessly*]: What must I do? Where is this General?

VON KLAUS

In the villa directly across the road, your highness. With your highness' permission, I shall now return to the princess. [*As* KOSOFF *starts in the wrong direction*]: The General resides in the villa just opposite, your highness.

[*He bows, enters the bedroom and closes the French windows.* KOSOFF's *attention is arrested by* LUISA, *who comes out of the hotel and goes towards* KUNIE's *bag. He eyes her as she strolls across the terrace, smiling coquettishly.*]

KOSOFF

[*Intercepting her*]: Bon jour, mignonne.

LUISA

[*Smiling*]: Si, si, eccellenza.

[*She breaks into a seductive laugh.*]

KOSOFF

[*Putting his arm about her*]: Comme vous êtes jolie, ma petite!

LUISA

Si, si, eccellenza.
[KOSOFF *kisses her.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Offstage*]: Luisa!

LUISA

Si, si, signora!
[KOSOFF, *annoyed, releases her.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Coming out of the hotel and hurrying across the terrace*]: Fate presto!

LUISA

Si, si, signora.
[*She smiles at* KOSOFF.]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Pardon, Herr Prinz, but all day long, this lazy pig is making trouble. [*Pushing* LUISA *toward the bags*]: Fate presto! Avete capito?

LUISA

Si, si, signora!
[*She smiles again at* KOSOFF.]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Losing her temper*]: Indolente porcheria!

[*She seizes* LUISA *roughly by the arm.* KOSOFF *looks on, in pained surprise.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Shaking* LUISA]: Sporcacciona! Fate presto! [*To* KOSOFF]: I have left in Norway a husband and two children and now she is stealing my man. [*To* LUISA]: Civettaccia! [*She shakes* LUISA, *forces her to her knees and slaps her face.* DE'MEDICI *stirs.*] Squaldrino! Dit store svin! Dit store specktakel! Mi rubi l'uomo, vergognosa!

LUISA

[*Screaming*]: Per carità! Mio dio, carità; Aiuto! Soccorso! No, signora!

DE'MEDICI

[*Imperiously, springing to his feet*]: Ma finitela!

[MRS. DE'MEDICI *releases* LUISA *who hurries into the house with* KUNIE'S *bag.*]

DE'MEDICI

[*Approaching* MRS. DE'MEDICI]: Entrate! Andate dentro e finitelo!

[*He points to the entrance door. He raises his hand threateningly.*]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Meekly*]: Si, si!

[*She hurries into the hotel.* DE'MEDICI, *muttering angrily, follows.* KOSOFF *sighs deeply, presses his hand to his forehead and goes toward the left, as* MARY ELIZABETH DODGE NORTON—MITZI—*hurries on at the right, obviously in a state of great agitation.* MITZI *is ten years older than* NAN, *but is still very attractive. She is expensively and modishly dressed, but her high-heeled slippers are covered with dust and she limps, painfully. She glances quickly about the terrace and catches sight of* KOSOFF *just as he is about to hurry off in an attempt to avoid her.*]

MITZI

[*Sharply*]: Ivan.

[KOSOFF *turns in pained surprise.*]

KOSOFF

Ah, Mitzi! Are you here also?

MITZI

[*Decisively*]: Yes, I *am!*

KOSOFF

[*Crossing to her*]: What happiness! [*He raises her hand languidly and kisses it.*] You look fatigued, my darling.

MITZI

[*Sinking into a chair*]: Fatigued! I'm just about dead. I flew all the way from London and then had to walk all the way from Sorrento. [*Impatiently*]: Where is Nan, anyhow?

KOSOFF

[*Wrinkling his brow*]: Anushka? Ah, yes, of course, you wish to see her. It is quite natural, you are sisters.

MITZI

Well, where is she?

KOSOFF

Unfortunately, she is not here, my angel.

MITZI

Well, where has she gone?

KOSOFF

She has gone to visit a ruined monastery, on top of a neighboring mountain. I no longer have an interest in such curiosities. My native Russia is full of ruined monasteries—full of ruined monasteries!

MITZI

So she's gone off by herself, I suppose. If that isn't just like Nan! She does the most exasperating—

KOSOFF

No, my darling. A young American is with her. His name has escaped me. A most unpleasant fellow.

MITZI

Not Charlie Carroll?

KOSOFF

Yes, Carroll. A barbarian.

MITZI

When will they be back?

KOSOFF

Tomorrow, I believe. They are spending the night in the monastery.

MITZI

[*Scandalized*]: Why, Ivan. Do you mean to say that Nan and Charlie Carroll are spending the night together in a ruined monastery?

KOSOFF

Do not be alarmed, my darling. An elderly American lady has accompanied them.

MITZI

Thank heaven for that, anyway. [*Bursting out*]: Just what *is* the matter between you and Nan?

KOSOFF

[*Wearily*]: I do not understand you, Mitzi.

MITZI

Nan telegraphed me from Paris— [*Breaking off*]: Isn't there some place where we can have a little privacy?

KOSOFF

These gentlemen do not understand English. Mais-peut-être, tu veux parler français?

MITZI

[*Crossly*]: No, I don't. I want to know what you've done to Nan.

KOSOFF

I? Your questions perplex me. Do not begin to ask me questions, my darling. I am filled with profound malaise. [*Pounding his chest.*] Weltschmerz! Weltschmerz! Ah, Mitzi, when you hold your head like that, it makes me think of you as you were, ten years—

MITZI

[*Sharply*]: Never mind about that! I want to know—

KOSOFF

Ah, those delicious nights in Barbizon! Do you recall—

MITZI

[*Agitated*]: It's disgusting of you to keep talking about the past. You know we agreed to forget all about that.

KOSOFF

How can I forget, when I see you looking so—?

MITZI

Well, you've simply got to, that's all. You know that we settled all that, in London. I thought everything was arranged and then, out of a clear sky, I get this telegram from Nan. [*She takes a telegram from her bag.*] It just simply drove me frantic. [*Reading the telegram*]: "Ivan has suddenly turned sour and—"

KOSOFF

[*With an expression of disgust turns right*]: Turned sour?

MITZI

Yes, that's what it says. [*Reading*]: Ivan has suddenly turned sour and I am putting six frontiers between us. Stop. Don't let him put anything over on you as I have the goods. Stop. In case of fire wire me care of Charlie, Pensione de'Medici, Sorrento. Nan." What did you do to her and what goods is she talking about?

KOSOFF

[*Putting his hand to his head*]: This is most fatigu-

ing! I do not understand the language in which this telegram is written.

MITZI

Oh, this is simply terrible! When I got this telegram, I simply didn't know what to do. So I decided that the only thing to do was to come here. And now, it seems that I might just as well have stayed at home with Nan off on a picnic, somewhere, and you behaving in a most disgusting manner.

KOSOFF

It would have been better if our parents had drowned us all, as they do in Russia with young cats. I must leave you now, Mitzi.

MITZI

Now where are *you* going?

KOSOFF

To visit a compatriot, my darling—a military gentleman with whom I have business.

MITZI

How long will you be gone?

KOSOFF

[*Shrugging his shoulders*]: I cannot say. These generals, my darling, you know how difficult they are.

[*He kisses her hand.*] Au revoir, Mitzi. It is a most distasteful errand—most distasteful.

[*He sighs, deeply, and goes toward the steps.*]

MITZI

[*Sharply*]: Ivan!

KOSOFF

[*Plaintively as he disappears down the steps*]: Auf wiedersehen, mein liebschen, auf wiedersehen!

MITZI

[*Greatly agitated*]: Oh!

[*She looks about, now knowing what to do.* THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER *leans forward and whispers rapidly to his bearded companion, who nods solemnly. Then they resume their game.*]

CHARLIE

[*Offstage*]: Never mind, Mrs. de'Medici—I'll get him later!

MITZI

[*Calling excitedly*]: Charlie! Charlie Carroll!

CHARLIE

[*In astonishment*]: Well, for—! Mitzi! [*He hurries out of the hotel.*] Well, I'll be—! When did you get here?

[LUISA *comes out of the hotel.*]

MITZI

But didn't you go to the monastery?

LUISA

[*Excitedly, as she sees* CHARLIE]: Signore! Signore! [*She motions to him to come over.*]

CHARLIE

What's the matter [*To* MITZI]: Monastery?

MITZI

Yes, Ivan said—

LUISA

Signore!

CHARLIE

All right! [*To* MITZI]: Excuse me. She seems to have something on her mind.

[*As he crosses to* LUISA, *the roar of an approaching car is heard.* LUISA *whispers excitedly to him, explaining with much gesticulation that* NAN *is in* KOSOFF'S *room.* CHARLIE, *astonished and indignant, rushes to the French windows, pushes them open, and plunges into the room out of sight.* LUISA *stands watching him with most intense interest,* MITZI *in utter bewilderment. Suddenly* STEPAN *dashes out of the room and collides vio-*

lently with LUISA *who slaps his face and runs into the hotel. One of* NAN'S *shoes flies out of the room and hits* STEPAN. *Then the other shoe flies out and hits him as he retreats into the hotel. Then* NAN *appears, shoeless and boiling with anger. She carries an armful of assorted male shoes. She is too busy to notice* MITZI. *At the same moment,* VON KLAUS *pushes* CHARLIE *out of the room, shakes an angry fist at him, retreats back into the room and closes and locks the French windows.* CHARLIE *turns away, just as* NAN *comes downstage, still carrying the shoes. The roar of the car dies away in the distance.* MITZI *for a moment, is speechless.*]

CHARLIE

[*To* NAN]: Are you all right?

NAN

[*Still very angry*]: Oh, I'm having a lovely time.

MITZI

[*At the top of her voice*]: Nan, what on earth is the matter?

[NAN *turns in astonishment and drops the shoes. For a moment she stares at* MITZI.]

NAN

[*At length*]: Well, for God's sake! The daughter of my parents! When did *you* drop in?

CHARLIE

Oh yes! Mitzi's here, too.

MITZI

[*Excitedly*]: What's the matter, anyhow? I thought you went to a monastery.

NAN

No, I'm not eligible.
[*She takes a chair.*]

MITZI

For heaven's sake, put your shoes on!

NAN

[*Looking at her feet*]: Shoes? Oh yes, to be sure.
[*She looks about for them.*]

CHARLIE

[*Picking them up*]: Here they are.

NAN

Thanks. [*To* MITZI, *as she puts on her shoes*]: Well,

if you aren't a sight for conjunctivitis. Did you bring Tom and the kids along?

MITZI

I had a fine time getting away from Tom. Finally I told him that you're very sick.

NAN

I am. Very sick of being married to Ivan.

MITZI

Thank goodness you're here, anyhow. I've been worrying myself frantic about you.

NAN

Tell you the truth, I've been a little concerned myself. When you start being kidnapped at my age, it's something to worry about.

MITZI

Kidnapped?

CHARLIE

What do you mean kidnapped?

NAN

All right, what do you call it when a couple of assorted foreigners grab you and hold you incommunicado?

CHARLIE

But what did they think they were doing anyhow?

NAN

The idea was, that my life-mate was going to take me on a little visit to Rome. My own feeling is that the road to Rome would have been heaped high with Slavic and Teutonic corpses.

CHARLIE

Well, it's a damned lucky thing that Luisa tipped me off.

NAN

Awfully sweet of you to take all that trouble—with all you've got on your mind.

MITZI

And do you mean to say that Ivan knew about this?

NAN

Collect your scattered wits, Mary Elizabeth. Do you think it was Hugo who was trying to elope with me?

MITZI

[*Agitatedly*]: I don't know who Hugo is.

NAN

Well, that's *your* loss.

CHARLIE

[*To* MITZI]: Do you know where Kosoff is?

MITZI

He said something about going to see some General.

CHARLIE

General? Must be Skulany! What would he be going to see Skulany for?

NAN

Maybe he's taking some caviar to the General.

CHARLIE

You're full of fun, aren't you?

MITZI

And he said that you two were spending the night in a monastery.

NAN

Sounds indecent to me.

[*The French windows open and* VON KLAUS' *head appears.*]

MITZI

[*Nervously*]: Look! Is something else going to happen?

[VON KLAUS *comes out of the room and picks up the shoes* NAN *has dropped.*]

NAN

Why, there's Hugo now. [*Waving her hand*]: 'Lo, Hugo. My big sister's been wanting to meet you.

MITZI

Nan!

CHARLIE

[*Threateningly*]: Hey, look here, Victor Hugo, if you try to pull any more rough stuff I'll have you sent up the river for life.

[VON KLAUS *glares at him, enters the room and closes the windows again.*]

NAN

Bravely spoken, Sergeant Carroll.

CHARLIE

[*Decisively*]: Now, listen to me, you two. The sooner you get out of Italy, the better. You're in a country where a male with a title and a marriage certificate gets all the breaks. You don't seem to realize what you're up against with this boy.

NAN

Oh no? Who's been having these sweet little sessions with him—you or me?

MITZI

But I don't understand a word of what you're talking about.

NAN

Well, understand three words. He loves me.

MITZI

Who loves you?

CHARLIE

[*Impatiently*]: Kosoff, of course!

NAN

[*Angrily*]: Thanks, so much! [*To* MITZI]: Hence, no divorce.

MITZI

But—

NAN

Sure, I know. But—! Also he had photographic copies of the letters.

MITZI

[*Beside herself, rises*]: Nan, for heaven's sake! You don't mean to say—!

NAN

Calme-toi. That part of it's O.K. I've confiscated the letters—threw 'em in the briny. You should have heard them sizzle.

MITZI

But what are we going to do now?

CHARLIE

Get to London as quickly as you can and put a battery of lawyers on the job, that's what. [*To* MITZI]: How did you come here, by plane?

MITZI

Yes. All the way from London.

CHARLIE

Where's the plane?

MITZI

It's waiting at Sorrento.

CHARLIE

All right—then the thing for you two to do is to get that plane to take you back to London just as quickly as possible, before Kosoff thinks up something else. [KOSOFF *appears on the balcony opposite.*]

MITZI

And what about you—aren't you coming with us?

CHARLIE

Why—I—

NAN

Mr. Carroll has other plans. [*Suddenly seeing* KOSOFF]: There's my Prince now!

CHARLIE

Where?

NAN

Chez Skulany. [*Calling*]: Yoo-hoo! Come on over, big boy!

[KOSOFF *turns and stares at her in astonishment.* CHARLIE *throws* NAN *an angry look.*]

CHARLIE

[*To* MITZI]: Take a tip from me and start right away. I'll go to Sorrento with you and see that you get safely started.

NAN

A heart of gold, if ever I saw one.

MITZI

But why aren't you coming to London with us? My goodness, I can't see what can be more important—

NAN

Don't be silly, Mitzi. Sheltered women like us can't understand what the life of a man of the world is like.

CHARLIE

Say, what do you expect me to do, anyhow? Just calmly break my word to somebody that's gotten herself into a terrible jam on my account?

NAN

I don't expect you to do anything, my lad. And what is more, I'd like it fine if you *didn't* do anything and just let me worry along about my own troubles. And what is still more, if we should happen not to run into each other again, it would suit me simply elegant.
[*She goes quickly into the hotel.*]

CHARLIE

Nan—! God, but she's unreasonable!

MITZI

What's the matter with you two, anyhow?

CHARLIE

I can't stop to explain it, now. Listen, Mitzi, go on in there and see if you can't get her to listen to reason, while I try to find somebody to help get the bags into Sorrento.

MITZI

All right, Charlie, all right! My goodness, if I ever get through this day alive—!
[*She goes into the hotel, leaving her handbag on the table.* CHARLIE *hurries toward the right.*]

KUNIE

[*Appearing on the balcony overhead*]: Sharles!

CHARLIE

[*Stopping and looking up*]: Hello, Kunie! I'll be right back! Got to help get Nan and her sister off for London!

[*He hurries off at the right. The roar of an approaching car is heard.* KOSOFF *stands at the edge of the balcony, looking over toward the terrace. Then he turns, as* GENERAL SKULANY *appears.* SKULANY *and* KOSOFF *are seen exchanging very formal greetings. The moment* SKULANY *appears,* THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER *leans forward and whispers a single word to his companion. At the same moment* MITZI *comes out of the house, in search of her handbag. As the racing-car roars by, the two* CHESS-PLAYERS *spring to their feet, push back their chairs and draw revolvers. Each fires three or four shots in the direction of the balcony.* SKULANY *and* KOSOFF *stagger and fall. The noise of the passing car drowns out the sound of the shots and of* MITZI'S *scream. The* CHESS-PLAYERS *turn away from the parapet and, to their surprise, discover* MITZI, *who stands transfixed with terror and astonishment.* THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER *approaches her, revolver in hand.* MITZI *claps her hand to her mouth in mortal fear. At the same instant, a male servant appears on the balcony opposite, looks down at the bodies, utters a yell and disappears.* THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER *is*

about to speak to MITZI, *when he sees* CHARLIE *approaching offstage right. With a commanding and threatening gesture, he motions* MITZI *to take a chair in the middle of the terrace. He puts his finger to his lips significantly.* MITZI, *in a state of collapse, totters to the chair, and seats herself, as* CHARLIE *comes running on.*]

CHARLIE

Say, did you see that over there? All of a sudden, those two birds dropped as if they had been shot.

MITZI

I—I—didn't notice—anything.

CHARLIE

[*Looking at her in surprise*]: No? Well, what's the matter with you? You look as if— [*Becoming suddenly conscious of a growing hubbub on the road—a number of people shouting and talking excitedly*]: Say, something *must* have happened.

[*He goes upstage and looks over the parapet. The male servant reappears on the balcony opposite accompanied by a Fascist guard. They bend down to examine the bodies.*]

CHARLIE

I'm going to see what's wrong. [*As he runs off, at the right*]: You wait here!

KUNIE

[*Rushing out of the hotel, as* CHARLIE *runs down the steps*]: Sharles! Sharles! Zey have shot him!

[*She runs down the steps.* MITZI *puts her hand, distractedly, to her head and looks toward* THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER, *who motions her to remain where she is. The tumult in the road increases and the* FASCIST GUARD *from the Pensione, appears on the balcony, and exchanges frantic gesticulations with the other guard and the servant.* MRS. DE' MEDICI *runs excitedly out of the hotel and disappears down the steps, followed by* DE'MEDICI. *The French windows open and* VON KLAUS *hurries out on to the terrace. As* VON KLAUS *goes towards the steps,* ROWLINSON *and* MRS. EVANS *hurry out of the house.*]

ROWLINSON

I say, von Klaus, what's happened?

VON KLAUS

I do not know.

[*He disappears down the steps. The others follow him.*]

MRS. EVANS

My, my, listen to the excitement!

ROWLINSON

Oh, I say! Something must have happened.

MRS. EVANS

Oh, I do hope it's nothing serious.

[*They all go down the steps.*]

NAN'S VOICE

[*Overhead*]: What ho, below.

MITZI

[*Looking up*]: Nan—!

NAN'S VOICE

[*Overhead*]: What's all the shouting for?

MITZI

[*Gasping*]: Nan—! Ivan—! Come right down!

NAN'S VOICE

All right! Tout de suite!

[*The* CHESS-PLAYERS *rise quickly and hurry downstage.* THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER *motions imperiously to* MITZI *to come over to where they are.* MITZI, *half-dead with fright, staggers to her feet and totters over to them. Throughout, the uproar of the crowd in the road can be heard.*]

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

[*Politely*]: Allow me, madame, to present myself and my friend.

[*He indicates* THE BEARDED CHESS-PLAYER, *who bows and smiles, affably.*]

MITZI

[*Gasping*]: But I thought—you—didn't speak English.

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

A slight error, madame. It is my friend who does not speak English.

[*He indicates his companion, who bows and smiles affably.*]

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

We hope that you will forgive our lack of ceremony, madame. We are Rumanian patriots, whose painful duty it has been to despatch an individual who has long been a menace to the liberties of our country. Unfortunately, Prince Kosoff happened to interpose his body and so we were obliged—

MITZI

[*Speaking with difficulty*]: Do you—think—he's—

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

I am an excellent marksman, madame. And my companion, also. [THE BEARDED CHESS-PLAYER *smiles and bows.*] We are the enemies of all hereditary aristocrats

and so we cannot greatly regret having despatched the Prince, also. I must ask you, madame, to maintain a discreet silence—

MITZI

[*Gulping*]: I won't—say—a word.

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

[*Bowing*]: Thank you, Madame. [THE BEARDED CHESS-PLAYER *bows also.*] And now, madame, if you will be good enough to assist us in returning to our beloved Rumania. We are Rumanian patriots and consequently not in affluent circumstances. [*As* MITZI *looks at him in bewilderment*]: Your purse is just behind you, Madame. Allow me.

[*He picks up her handbag and hands it to her.*]

MITZI

[*Opening her purse*]: How much— [*She takes out a thousand-lire note and gives it to him.*] Will this do?

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

A thousand lire? It will scarcely take us to the frontier, Madame.

MITZI

[*Giving him another thousand*]: Well, here then.

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

Thank you, madame. [*They both bow.*] And now,

madame, a small contribution to the cause of Rumanian liberty.

MITZI

[*Pressing some more bills into his hand*]: Here, for heaven's sake! Take it—and go.

THE SMALL CHESS-PLAYER

With pleasure, madame. And our blessings. Every Rumanian patriot will offer up a prayer of thanksgiving to you. [*He kisses her hand as he sees* NAN *approaching, offstage*]: Au revoir, madame. And remember, a discreet silence!

THE BEARDED CHESS-PLAYER

[*Kissing her hand*]: Au revoir, madame!

[*They pick up* CHARLIE'S *and* NAN'S *bags and cross the terrace quickly, disappearing at the left as* NAN *comes out of the hotel.*]

NAN

Hey! Wait a minute. [*She starts to run after them.*]

MITZI

[*Stopping her*]: Nan! Stay here!

NAN

[*Trying to escape*]: What do you mean—stay here? I want to know where they're going with my bags.

MITZI

[*Hysterically*]: Let them go, I tell you!

NAN

[*Looking at her in amazement*]: Say, what's the matter, anyhow? You look like the wrath of God.

CHARLIE

[*Hurrying up the steps*]: Nan!

NAN

[*To* CHARLIE]: Charlie, what's going on around here?

CHARLIE

You're a widow, that's what!

NAN

[*Tensely*]: What do you mean by that?

CHARLIE

Kosoff is dead.

NAN

[*Soberly*]: Do you really mean it?

CHARLIE

Absolutely. He and Skulany were standing on the balcony there and those two birds potted them both.

NAN

Who? Those two dummies?

CHARLIE

Yes. Kunie saw them from upstairs. [*To* MITZI]: What happened to them?

MITZI

They went back to Rumania.

CHARLIE

Rumania? Say, do you suppose—! [*He goes over to the chess-table.*] Wait a minute! I'll bet they were just sitting here waiting for a chance— Say, what do *you* know about this?

MITZI

Nothing. I don't know anything about it. They just said they were Rumanian patriots, that's all.

NAN

Said? Since when do you understand Rumanian?

MITZI

They spoke English.

[NAN *and* CHARLIE *look at each other. A racing-car is heard approaching.*]

NAN

Well, all I can say is, they've got a nice lot of dirt to take back to Rumania with them.

CHARLIE

[*To* MITZI]: Did you see them—?

MITZI

I—why—I—

[*The rest of her speech is drowned in the noise of the car. The roaring suddenly ends, in a frightful grinding of brakes, as the car stops short to avoid running into the crowd in the road. An uproar of voices is heard.* CHARLIE *and* NAN *look over the parapet.*]

MITZI

Now, what's the matter?

CHARLIE

[*Turning away*]: Gosh, that was a narrow squeak! Three inches more and there'd have been a few more killings.

NAN

But, Charlie, I don't understand to this day why they shot Ivan.

CHARLIE

He just got in the way, I guess. He had a faculty for getting in the way. I knew it would get him into trouble.

NAN

Maybe it's mushy, but I feel kind of sorry for him.

CHARLIE

Well, so do I, after a fashion. But I guess he's one of those lads that you just naturally like better when he's dead than when he's alive. [*As* KUNIE *comes up the steps*]: Kunie, listen: they were a couple of Rumanian conspirators—

KUNIE

Yes, I sought so. Ze poor Jan. Always he had fear of assassination—

CHARLIE

[*Decisively*]: Listen to me, all of you. This is a job for the Italian police to handle by themselves. Let's not add any more international complications to it. *Nobody* saw *anything*, do you hear?

KUNIE

[*Going to* NAN]: Frau Prinzessin, I shall not go with Sharles.

CHARLIE

Now, just a minute, Kunie—!

KUNIE

No, Sharles, I shall not go with you. You have now your Prinzessin.

NAN

Gosh, I don't want to come between you two!

KUNIE

No, it is not coming between. I know all the time zat he is loving you most.

CHARLIE

But Kunie, I'm not trying to get out of it. Everything I said to you goes.

KUNIE

No, Sharles. I shall not go wis you. All ze time you will be sinking of ze Prinzessin and zat I shall not like. [*Patting his cheek*]: You are a nice boy, Sharles. But it is better I do not go wis you.
[*She smiles at them.*]

CHARLIE

Well, gosh, I don't know what to say—!

KUNIE

It is nossing to say. [*She goes toward the steps, then stops and turns.*] Perhaps, you will help me to go alone to Paris, yes?

CHARLIE

[*As* KUNIE *goes off*]: Kunie!

NAN

[*Coming over to* CHARLIE]: Help her get to Paris! Why, we'll give her the Eiffel Tower.

[CHARLIE *takes her in his arms and kisses her.* MRS. DE'MEDICI *comes up the steps followed by two* FASCIST GUARDS.]

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Excitedly*]: Excuse me, but we must all go to prison.

CHARLIE

What?

MITZI

[*Nervously*]: Oh, my God, are they going to accuse us—!

MRS. DE'MEDICI

Do not have fear, Madame. It is for interfering with the motor-car race.

NAN

Well—for—!

CHARLIE

You see! You can't monkey with the government in *this* country. Come on, girls.

MITZI

[*As she goes down the steps*]: Oh, I'll never survive this experience.

MRS. DE'MEDICI

[*Reassuringly to everybody*]: Tomorrow they will let us go again.

[*She goes down the steps followed by one of the guards.*]

NAN

Well, there's nothing as relaxing after a busy day, as a night in prison.

CHARLIE

[*Suddenly*]: Say, what happened to our bags?

NAN

On their way to Rumania. And what a time that boy with the beaver is going to have getting into my scanties. [*To the remaining* GUARD]: All right, Leftenant. Where's the Black Maria?

CHARLIE

[*Suddenly*]: Just a minute.

THE GUARD

[*Sharply*]: Venite, signore!

CHARLIE

Si, si, subito! [*He takes up the two bottles of Chambertin and holds them aloft.*] Vino!

[THE GUARD *nods and laughs. The Triumphal March from Aïda is heard on the radio.*]

CHARLIE

[*Tucking a bottle of wine under each arm*]: Let's go!

NAN

[*As they go off*]: Charlie, I want to spend my next honeymoon in Newark.

CHARLIE

All right, kid, I'll wire for reservations.

[*They go down the steps. As the* GUARD *is about to follow them* LUISA *comes out of the hotel and goes toward the bedroom downstage.*]

THE GUARD

[*Sharply*]: Ss! Venite!

[LUISA *turns, smiles, rolls her eyes seductively and enters the bedroom. The* GUARD *hesitates a moment, then breaks into a broad grin, comes downstage quickly, takes up the remaining bottle of wine, enters the bedroom, and closes the French windows as the curtain falls.*]

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See Naples and die